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from 11 ranch





T H E
P L A Y S
O F
WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE.
VOLUME THE FIFTEENTH.

THE
PLAYS
OF
WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE.
VOLUME THE FIFTEENTH.

CONTAINING
HAMLET.
OTHELLO.

L O N D O N :

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H A M L E T.*

VOL. XV.

B

* HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARK.] The original story on which this play is built, may be found in Saxo Grammaticus the Danish historian. From thence Belleforest adopted it in his collection of novels, in seven volumes, which he began in 1564, and continued to publish through succeeding years. From this work, *The Historie of Hamblett*, quarto, bl. l. was translated. I have hitherto met with no earlier edition of the play than one in the year 1604, though it must have been performed before that time, as I have seen a copy of Speght's edition of Chaucer, which formerly belonged to Dr. Gabriel Harvey, (the antagonist of Nash) who, in his own hand-writing, has set down *Hamlet*, as a performance with which he was well acquainted, in the year 1598. His words are these: "The younger sort take much delight in Shakspeare's *Venus and Adonis*; but his *Lucrece*, and his tragedy of *Hamlet Prince of Denmarke*, have it in them to please the wiser sort, 1598."

In the books of the Stationers' Company, this play was entered by James Roberts, July 26, 1602, under the title of "A booke called *The Revenge of Hamlett, Prince of Denmarke*, as it was lately acted by the Lord Chamberlain his servantes."

In *Eastward Hoe*, by George Chapman, Ben Jonson, and John Marston, 1605, is a fling at the hero of this tragedy. A footman named *Hamlet* enters, and a tankard-bearer asks him—"Sfoote, *Hamlet*, are you mad?"

The frequent allusions of contemporary authors to this play sufficiently show its popularity. Thus, in Decker's *Bel-man's Nightwalkes*, 4to. 1612, we have—"But if any mad *Hamlet*, hearing this, smell villainie, and rush in by violence to see what the tawny diuels [gypsies] are dooing, then they excuse the fact" &c. Again, in an old collection of Satirical Poems, called *The Night-Raven*, is this couplet:

"I will not cry *Hamlet Revenge* my greeves,
But I will call Hangman, Revenge on thieves."

STEEVENS.

Surely no satire was intended in *Eastward Hoe*, which was acted at Shakspeare's own playhouse, (Blackfriars,) by the children of the revels, in 1605. MALONE.

The following particulars relative to the date of this piece, are borrowed from Dr. Farmer's *Essay on the Learning of Shakspeare*, p. 85, 86, second edition:

"Greene, in the Epistle prefixed to his *Arcadia*, hath a lash at some 'vaine glorious tragedians,' and very plainly at Shakspeare in particular.—'I leave all these to the mercy of their mother-tongue, that feed on nought but the crumbs that fall from the translator's trencher.—That could scarcely latinize their neck verse if they should have neede, yet *Englisb Seneca* read by candlelight

yeelds many good sentences—hee will afford you whole *Hamlets*, I should say, *bandfuls* of tragicall speeches.—I cannot determine exactly when this *Epistle* was first published; but, I fancy, it will carry the original *Hamlet* somewhat further back than we have hitherto done: and it may be observed, that the oldest copy now extant, is said to be ‘enlarged to almost as much againe as it was.’ *Gabriel Harvey* printed at the end of the year 1592, ‘*Four Letters and certaine Sonnetts, especially touching Robert Greene:*’ in one of which his *Arcadia* is mentioned. Now *Nasb’s* *Epistle* must have been previous to these, as *Gabriel* is quoted in it with applause; and the *Four Letters* were the beginning of a quarrel. *Nasb* replied in ‘*Strange News of the intercepting certaine Letters, and a Convoy of Verses, as they were going privilie to victual the Low Countries, 1593.*’ *Harvey* rejoined the same year in ‘*Pierce’s Supererogation, or a new Praise of the old Affe.*’ And *Nasb* again, in ‘*Have with you to Saffron Walden, or Gabriell Harvey’s Hunt is up;*’ containing a full answer to the eldest sonne of the halter-maker, 1596.”—*Nasb* died before 1606, as appears from an old comedy called *The Return from Parnassus*. STEVENS.

A play on the subject of *Hamlet* had been exhibited on the stage before the year 1589, of which Thomas Kyd was, I believe, the author. On that play, and on the bl. letter *Historie of Hamblet*, our poet, I conjecture, constructed the tragedy before us. The earliest edition of the prose-narrative which I have seen, was printed in 1608, but it undoubtedly was a republication.

Shakspeare’s *Hamlet* was written, if my conjecture be well founded, in 1596. See *An Attempt to ascertain the Order of his Plays*, Vol. I. MALONE.

PERSONS represented.

Claudius, *King of Denmark.*

Hamlet,* *son to the former, and nephew to the present, king.*

Polonius, *Lord Chamberlain.*

Horatio, *friend to Hamlet.*

Laertes, *son to Polonius.*

Voltimand,

Cornelius,

Rosencrantz,

Guildenstern,

} *Courtiers.*

Oftrick, *a courtier.*

Another courtier.

A Priest.

Marcellus,

Bernardo,

} *Officers.*

Francisco, *a soldier.*

Reynaldo, *servant to Polonius.*

A Captain. An Ambassador.

Ghost of Hamlet's father.

Fortinbras, *Prince of Norway.*

Gertrude, *Queen of Denmark, and mother of Hamlet.*

Ophelia, *daughter of Polonius.*

Lords, Ladies, Officers, Soldiers, Players, Grave-diggers, Sailors, Messengers, and other Attendants.

SCENE, Elsinore.

* *Hamlet,*] i. e. *Amleth*. The *b* transferred from the end to the beginning of the name. STEEVENS.

H A M L E T,

PRINCE OF DENMARK.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Elfinore. *A Platform before the Castle.*

FRANCISCO *on his post.* Enter to him BERNARDO.

BER. Who's there?

FRAN. Nay, answer me:² stand, and unfold Yourself.

BER. Long live the king!³

FRAN. Bernardo?

BER. He.

FRAN. You come most carefully upon your hour.

BER. 'Tis now struck twelve;⁴ get thee to bed, Francisco.

FRAN. For this relief, much thanks: 'tis bitter cold,
And I am sick at heart.

BER. Have you had quiet guard?

FRAN. Not a mouse stirring.

² — me:] i. e. *me* who am already on the watch, and have a right to demand the watch-word. STEEVENS.

³ *Long live the king!*] This sentence appears to have been the watch-word. MALONE.

⁴ *'Tis now struck twelve;*] I strongly suspect that the true reading is—*new* struck &c. So, in *Romeo and Juliet*, Act I. sc. i:

“ But *new* struck nine.” STEEVENS.

BER. Well, good night.
If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,
The rivals of my watch,⁴ bid them make haste.

[*The rivals of my watch,*] *Rivals* for partners.

WARBURTON.

So, in Heywood's *Rape of Lucrece*, 1636:

"Tullia. Aruns, associate him.

"Aruns. A rival with my brother," &c.

Again, in *The Tragedy of Hoffman*, 1637:

"And make thee rival in those governments."

Again, in *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act III. sc. v:

"—having made use of him in the wars against Pompey,
presently deny'd him *rivality*." STERVENS.

By *rivals* the speaker certainly means *partners* (according to Dr. Warburton's explanation,) or those whom he expected to watch with him. Marcellus had watched with him before; whether as a centinel, a volunteer, or from mere curiosity, we do not learn: but, which ever it was, it seems evident that his station was on the same spot with Bernardo, and that there is no other centinel by them relieved. Possibly Marcellus was an officer, whose business it was to visit each watch, and perhaps to continue with it some time. Horatio, as it appears, watches out of curiosity. But in Act II. sc. i. to Hamlet's question,—“Hold you the watch to-night?” Horatio, Marcellus, and Bernardo, all answer,—“We do, my honour'd lord.” The folio indeed, reads—*both*, which one may with greater propriety refer to Marcellus and Bernardo. If we did not find the latter gentleman in such good company, we might have taken him to have been like Francisco whom he relieves, an honest but common soldier. The strange indiscriminate use of Italian and Roman names in this and other plays, makes it obvious that the author was very little conversant in even the rudiments of either language. RITSON.

Rival is constantly used by Shakspeare for a partner or associate. In Bullokar's *English Expofitor*, 8vo. 1616, it is defined, “*One that sueth for the same thing with another*,” and hence Shakspeare, with his usual licence, always uses it in the sense of *one engaged in the same employment or office with another*. *Competitor*, which is explained by Bullokar by the very same words which he has employed in the definition of *rival*, is in like manner (as Mr. M. Mason has observed,) always used by Shakspeare for *associate*. See Vol. III, p. 221, n. 5.

Mr. Warner would read and point thus:

If you do meet Horatio, and Marcellus
The rival of my watch,—

PRINCE OF DENMARK.

7

Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.

FRAN. I think, I hear them.—Stand, ho! Who is there?

HOR. Friends to this ground.

MAR. And liegemen to the Dane.

FRAN. Give you good night.

MAR. O, farewell, honest soldier:
Who hath reliev'd you?

FRAN. Bernardo hath my place.
Give you good night [Exit FRANCISCO.

MAR. Holla! Bernardo!

BER. Say,
What, is Horatio there?

HOR, A piece of him.'

because Horatio is a gentleman of no profession, and because, as he conceived, there was but one person on each watch. But there is no need of change. Horatio is certainly not an officer, but Hamlet's fellow-student at Wittenberg: but as he accompanied Marcellus and Bernardo on the watch from a motive of curiosity, our poet considers him very properly as an *associate* with them. Horatio himself says to Hamlet in a subsequent scene,

" — This to me

" In dreadful secrecy impart they did,

" And I with them the third night kept the watch."

MALONE.

' Hor. A piece of him.] But why a *piece*? He says this as he gives his hand. Which direction should be marked.

WARBURTON.

A *piece of him*, is, I believe, no more than a cant expression. It is used, however, on a serious occasion in *Pericles*:

" Take in your arms this *piece* of your dead queen."

STEVENS.

BER. Welcome, Horatio; welcome, good Marcellus.

HOR. What,⁶ has this thing appear'd again to-night?

BER. I have seen nothing.

MAR. Horatio says, 'tis but our fantasy;
And will not let belief take hold of him,
Touching this dreaded sight, twice seen of us:
Therefore I have entreated him along,
With us to watch the minutes of this night;⁷
That, if again this apparition come,
He may approve our eyes,⁸ and speak to it.

HOR. Tush! tush! 'twill not appear.

BER. Sit down awhile;
And let us once again assail your ears,
That are so fortified against our story,

⁶ *Hor. What, &c.*] Thus the quarto, 1604. STEEVENS.

These words are in the folio given to Marcellus. MALONE.

⁷ — *the minutes of this night*;] This seems to have been an expression common in Shakspeare's time. I find it in one of Ford's plays, *The Fancies chaste and noble*, Act V:

"I promise ere *the minutes of the night*." STEEVENS.

⁸ — *approve our eyes*,] Add a new testimony to that of our eyes. JOHNSON.

So, in *King Lear*:

"—this *approves* her letter,

"That she would soon be here."

See Vol. XII. p. 413, n. 7. STEEVENS.

He may approve our eyes,] He may make good the testimony of our eyes; be assured by his own experience of the truth of that which we have related, in consequence of having been eye-witnesses to it. To *approve* in Shakspeare's age, signified to *make good*, or establish, and is so defined in Cawdrey's *Alphabetical Table of hard English words*, 8vo, 1604. So, in *King Lear*:

"Good king, that must *approve* the common faw!

"Thou out of heaven's benediction com'st

"To the warm sun." MALONE.

PRINCE OF DENMARK.

9

What we two nights have seen.⁹

HOR. Well, sit we down,
And let us hear Bernardo speak of this.

BER. Last night of all,
When yon same star, that's westward from the
pole,
Had made his course to illume that part of heaven
Where now it burns, Marcellus, and myself,
The bell then beating one,—

MAR. Peace, break thee off; look, where it
comes again!

Enter Ghost.

BER. In the same figure, like the king that's
dead.

MAR. Thou art a scholar, speak to it, Horatio.²

BER. Looks it not like the king? mark it, Ho-
ratio.

HOR. Most like:—it harrows me³ with fear, and
wonder.

⁹ *What we two nights have seen.*] This line is by Sir T. Hanmer given to Marcellus, but without necessity. JOHNSON.

² *Thou art a scholar, speak to it, Horatio.*] It has always been a vulgar notion that spirits and supernatural beings can only be spoken to with propriety or effect by persons of learning. Thus, Toby in *The Night-walker*, by Beaumont and Fletcher, says:

“ ——— It grows still longer,

“ 'Tis steeple-high now; and it falls away, nurse.

“ Let's call the butler up, for he speaks Latin,

“ And that will daunt the devil.”

In like manner the honest butler in Mr. Addison's *Drummer*, recommends the steward to speak *Latin* to the ghost in that play.

REED.

³ ——— *it harrows me &c.*] To *barrow* is to conquer, to subdue.

BER. It would be spoke to.

MAR. Speak to it, Horatio.

HOR. What art thou, that usurp'st this time of night,

Together with that fair and warlike form
In which the majesty of buried Denmark
Did sometimes march? by heaven I charge thee,
speak.

MAR. It is offended.

BER. See! it stalks away.

HOR. Stay; speak; speak I charge thee, speak.
[Exit Ghost.]

MAR. 'Tis gone, and will not answer.

BER. How now, Horatio? you tremble, and look pale:

Is not this something more than fantasy?
What think you of it?

HOR. Before my God, I might not this believe,
Without the sensible and true avouch
Of mine own eyes.

MAR. Is it not like the king?

HOR. As thou art to thyself:
Such was the very armour he had on,
When he the ambitious Norway combated;
So frown'd he once, when, in an angry parle,⁴

The word is of Saxon origin. So, in the old bl. L. romance of *Syr Eglamour of Iheruse*:

"He frowne for him that *harrowed* hell."

Milton has adopted this phrase in his *Comus*:

"Amaz'd I stood, *harrow'd* with grief and fear."

STEEVENS.

* — [in *angry parle*.] This is one of the affected words introduced by Lyly. So, in *Four Mye Men and all the Ruck Fowls*, 1610:

"— that you told me at our last *parle*." STEEVENS.

PRINCE OF DENMARK.

11

He smote the fledded⁵ Polack on the ice.⁶

'Tis strange.

MAR. Thus, twice before, and jump at this dead hour,⁷

⁵ ——— *fledded* —] A *sled*, or *sledge*, is a carriage without wheels, made use of in the cold countries. So, in *Tamburlaine, or the Scythian Shepherd*, 1590:

“ ————— upon an ivory *sled*

“ Thou shalt be drawn among the frozen poles.”

STEEVENS.

⁶ *He smote the fledded Polack on the ice.*] *Pole-ax* in the common editions. He speaks of a prince of Poland whom he slew in battle. He uses the word *Polack* again, Act II, sc. iv. POPE.

Polack was, in that age, the term for an inhabitant of Poland: *Polaque*, French. As in F. Davison's translation of Passeratius's epitaph on Henry III, of France, published by Camden:

“ Whether thy chance or choice thee hither brings,

“ Stay, passenger, and wait the hap of kings.

“ This little stone a great king's heart doth hold,

“ Who rul'd the fickle French and *Polacks* bold:

“ Whom, with a mighty warlike host attended,

“ With trait'rous knife a cowed monster ended.

“ So frail are even the highest earthly things!

“ Go, passenger, and wait the hap of kings.” JOHNSON.

Again, in *The White Devil, or Vittoria Corombona*, &c. 1612:

“ ——— I scorn him

“ Like a shav'd *Polack* —.” STEEVENS.

All the old copies have *Polax*. Mr. Pope and the subsequent editors read—*Polack*; but the corrupted word shews, I think, that Shakspeare wrote—*Polacks*. MALONE.

With *Polack* for *Polander*, the transcriber, or printer, might have no acquaintance; he therefore substituted *pole-ax* as the only word of like sound that was familiar to his ear. Unluckily, however, it happened that the *singular* of the latter has the same sound as the *plural* of the former. Hence it has been supposed that Shakspeare meant to write *Polacks*. We cannot well suppose that in a *parley* the King belaboured many, as it is not likely that provocation was given by more than one, or that on such an occasion he would have condescended to strike a meaner person than a prince.

STEEVENS.

⁷ ——— *jump at this dead hour,*] So, the 4to. 1604. The folio—*just*. STEEVENS.

The correction was probably made by the author. JOHNSON,

With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch.

HOR. In what particular thought to work,⁸ I know not;

But, in the gross and scope⁹ of mine opinion,
This bodes some strange eruption to our state.

MAR. Good now, sit down, and tell me, he that knows,

Why this same strict and most observant watch
So nightly toils the subject of the land;
And why such daily cast¹ of brazen cannon,
And foreign mart for implements of war;
Why such impress of shipwrights,³ whose sore task
Does not divide the Sunday from the week:
What might be toward, that this sweaty haste
Doth make the night joint-labourer with the day;
Who is't, that can inform me?

HOR. That can I;
At least, the whisper goes so. Our last king,

In the folio we sometimes find a familiar word substituted for one more ancient. MALONE.

Jump and *jae* were synonymous in the time of Shakspeare. Ben Jonson speaks of verses made on *jump names*, i. e. names that suit exactly. Nash says—"and *jampe* imitating a verse in As in præfenti." So, in Chapman's *May Day*, 1611:

"Your appointment was *jampe* at three, with me."

Again, in M. Kvffin's translation of the *Andria* of Terence, 1588:

"Comes he this day so *jump* in the very time of this marriage?" STEEVENS.

⁸ *In what particular thought to work,*] i. e. What particular train of thinking to follow. STEEVENS.

⁹ — *gross and scope* —] General thoughts, and tendency at large. JOHNSON.

¹ — *daily cast* —] The quartos read—*cast*. STEEVENS.

³ *Why such impress of shipwrights,*] Judge Barrington, *Observations on the more ancient Statutes*, p. 300, having observed that Shakspeare gives English manners to every country where his

Whose image even but now appear'd to us,
 Was, as you know, by Fortinbras of Norway,
 Thereto prick'd on by a most emulate pride,
 Dar'd to the combat; in which, our valiant Hamlet
 (For so this side of our known world esteem'd him,)
 Did slay this Fortinbras; who, by a seal'd com-
 pact,
 Well ratified by law, and heraldry,⁴
 Did forfeit, with his life, all those his lands,
 Which he stood seiz'd of, to the conqueror:
 Against the which, a moiety competent
 Was gaged by our king; which had return'd
 To the inheritance of Fortinbras,
 Had he been vanquisher; as, by the same co-mart,
 And carriage of the article design'd,⁵

scene lies, infers from this passage, that in the time even of Queen Elizabeth, shipwrights as well as seamen were forced to serve.

WHALLEY.

Impress signifies only the act of retaining shipwrights by giving them what was called *press* money (from *pret*, Fr.) for holding themselves in *readiness* to be employed. See Mr. Douce's note on *King Lear*, Vol. XIV. p. 233, n. 4. STEEVENS.

⁴ — by law, and heraldry,] Mr. Upton says, that Shakspeare sometimes expresses one thing by two substantives, and that *law* and *heraldry* means, by the *herald law*. So, in *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act IV:

“Where rather I expect victorious life,

“Than death and honour.”

i. e. honourable death. STEEVENS.

Puttenham, in his *Art of Poesie*, speaks of the *Figure of Twynnes*, “*borfes and barbes*, for *barbed borfes*, *venim & dartes*, for *venimous dartes*,” &c. FARMER.

— *law, and heraldry*,] That is, according to the forms of *law* *heraldry*. When the right of property was to be determined by combat, the rules of *heraldry* were to be attended to, as well as those of *law*. M. MASON.

i. e. to be well ratified by the rules of law, and the forms prescribed *jure feciali*; such as proclamation, &c. MALONE.

⁵ — as, by the same co-mart,

And carriage of the article design'd,] *Comart* signifies a bargain,

His fell to Hamlet: Now, fir, young Fortinbras,
 Of unimproved mettle hot and full,⁶
 Hath in the skirts of Norway, here and there,
 Shark'd up a list of landless resolute,⁷
 For food and diet, to some enterprize
 That hath a stomach in't:⁸ which is no other
 (As it doth well appear unto our state,)
 But to recover of us, by strong hand,
 And terms compulsory,⁹ those foresaid lands

and carrying of the article, the *covenant* entered into to confirm that bargain. Hence we see the common reading [*covenant*] makes a tautology. WARBURTON.

Thus the quarto, 1604. The folio reads—as by *the same covenant*: for which the late editions have given us—as by *that* covenant.

Co-mart is, I suppose, a *joint bargain*, a word perhaps of our poet's coinage. A *mart* signifying a great fair or market, he would not have scrupled to have written—to *mart*, in the sense of *to make a bargain*. In the preceding speech we find *mart* used for bargain or purchase. MALONE.

He has not scrupled so to write in *Cymbeline*:

“ ——— to *mart*,

“ As in a Romish *few*,” &c.

See Vol. XIII. p. 58. STEEVENS.

And carriage of the article design'd,] *Carriage*, is *import: design'd*, is *formed, drawn up between them*. JOHNSON.

Cawdrey in his *Alphabetical Table*, 1604, defines the verb *design* thus: “ To marke out or appoint for any purpose.” See also Minshew's Dict. 1617. “ To *designe* or shew by a token.” *Designed* is yet used in this sense in Scotland. The old copies have *designe*. The correction was made by the editor of the second folio.

MALONE.

⁶ *Of unimproved &c.*] *Full of unimproved mettle*, is full of spirit not regulated or guided by knowledge or experience. JOHNSON.

⁷ *Shark'd up a list &c.*] I believe, to *shark up* means to pick up without distinction, as the *shark*-fish collects his prey. The quartos read *lawless*, instead of *landless*. STEEVENS.

⁸ *That hath a stomach in't:*] *Stomach*, in the time of our author, was used for *constancy, resolution*. JOHNSON.

⁹ *And terms compulsory,*] Thus the quarto, 1604. The folio—*compulsive*. STEEVENS.

So by his father lost: And this, I take it,
Is the main motive of our preparations;
The source of this our watch; and the chief head
Of this post-haste and romage² in the land.

[*BER.* I think,³ it be no other, but even so:
Well may it fort,⁴ that this portentous figure
Comes armed through our watch; so like the king
That was, and is, the question of these wars.⁵

² — *romage* —] Tumultuous hurry. JOHNSON.

Commonly written—*rummage*. STEEVENS.

³ [*I think, &c.*] These, and all other lines confined within crotchets throughout this play, are omitted in the folio edition of 1623. The omissions leave the play sometimes better and sometimes worse, and seem made only for the sake of abbreviation.

JOHNSON.

It may be worth while to observe, that the title-pages of the first quartos in 1604 and 1605, declare this play to be *enlarged to almost as much againe as it was, according to the true and perfect copy*.

Perhaps therefore many of its absurdities as well as beauties arose from the quantity added after it was first written. Our poet might have been more attentive to the amplification than the coherence of his fable.

The degree of credit due to the title-page that styles the MS. from which the quartos, 1604 and 1605 were printed, the *true and perfect copy*, may also be disputable. I cannot help supposing this publication to contain all Shakspeare rejected, as well as all he supplied. By restorations like the former, contending booksellers or theatres might have gained some temporary advantage over each other, which at this distance of time is not to be understood. The patience of our ancestors exceeded our own, could it have outlasted the tragedy of *Hamlet* as it is now printed; for it must have occupied almost five hours in representation. If, however, it was too much dilated on the ancient stage, it is as injudiciously contracted on the modern one. STEEVENS.

⁴ *Well may it fort,*] The cause and effect are proportionate and suitable. JOHNSON.

⁵ — *the question of these wars.*] The theme or subject. So, in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

“ — You were the word of war.” MALONE.

HOR. A mote it is,⁶ to trouble the mind's eye.
In the most high and palmy state of Rome,⁷
A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,
The graves stood tenantless, and the sheeted dead
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets.

— — — — —
As, stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,
Disasters in the sun;⁸ and the moist star,⁹

⁶ *A mote it is,*] The first quarto reads—*a mote*. STEEVENS.

A *mote* was only the old spelling of *mote*, as I suspected in revising a passage in *King John*, Vol. VIII. p. 122, n. 6, where we certainly should read *mote*. MALONE.

1 ——— palmy state of Rome,] *Palmy*, for *victrix*. POPE.

⁸ *As, stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,*
Disasters in the sun;] Mr. Rowe altered these lines, because they have insufficient connection with the preceding ones, thus:

Stars shone with trains of fire, dews of blood fell,
Disasters veil'd the sun,——

This passage is not in the folio. By the quartos therefore our imperfect text is supplied; for an intermediate verse being evidently lost, it were idle to attempt a union that never was intended. I have therefore signified the supposed deficiency by a vacant space.

When Shakspeare had told us that *the graves stood tenantless*, &c. which are wonders confined to the earth, he naturally proceeded to say (in the line now lost) that *yet other prodigies appeared in the sky*; and these phenomena he exemplified by adding,—*As* [i. e. as for instance] *Stars with trains of fire*, &c. STEEVENS.

Disasters dimm'd the sun;] The quarto, 1604, reads:

Disasters in the sun;——

For the emendation I am responsible. It is strongly supported not only by Plutarch's account in the life of Cæsar, ["also the brightness of the *sunne* was darkened, the which, all that yeare through, rose very *pale*, and *skined us out*,"] but by various passages in our author's works. So, in *The Tempest*:

"——— I have be-dimm'd

"The noon-tide *sun*."

Again, in *King Richard II.*:

"As doth the blushing discontented *sun*,—

"When he perceives the envious clouds are bent

"To *dim* his glory."

PRINCE OF DENMARK. 17

Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands,
Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse.

Again, in our author's 18th Sonnet:

" Sometimes too hot *the eye of heaven* shines,
" And often is his gold complexion *dim'd*."

I suspect that the words *As stars* are a corruption, and have no doubt that either a line preceding or following the first of those quoted at the head of this note, has been lost; or that the beginning of one line has been joined to the end of another, the intervening words being omitted. That such conjectures are not merely chimerical, I have already proved. See Vol. VIII. p. 543, &c. n. 7; and Vol. X. p. 535, n. 7.

The following lines in *Julius Cæsar*, in which the prodigies that are said to have preceded his death, are recounted, may throw some light on the passage before us:

" ——— There is one within,
" Besides the things that we have heard and seen,
" Recounts most horrid fights seen by the watch.
" A lioness hath whelped in the streets;
" And graves have yawn'd and yielded up their dead:
" Fierce fiery warriors fight upon the clouds,
" In ranks, and squadrons, and right form of war,
" Which drizzled blood upon the capitol:
" The noise of battle hurtled in the air,
" Horses do neigh, and dying men did groan;
" And ghosts did shriek and squeal about the streets."

The lost words perhaps contained a description of *fiery warriors fighting on the clouds*, or of *brands burning bright beneath the stars*.

The 15th book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, translated by Golding, in which an account is given of the prodigies that preceded Cæsar's death, furnished Shakspeare with some of the images in both these passages:

" — battels fighting in the clouds with crashing armour
flew,
" And dreadful trumpets founded in the ayre, and hornes
eke blew,
" As warning men beforehand of the mischief that did
brew;
" And Phœbus also looking *dim* did cast a drowfie light,
" Uppon the earth, which seemde likewise to be in fory
plight:
" From underneath beneath the starres brandes oft seemde
burning bright,

And even^a the like precurse of fierce events,³—
As harbingers preceding still the fates,

“ It often rain’d drops of blood. The morning star look’d
blew,

“ And was bespotted here and there with specks of rustie hew.

“ The moone had also spots of blood.—

“ Salt teares from ivorie—images in fundry places fell;—

“ The dogges did howle, and every where appeared ghastly
sprights,

“ And with an earthquake shaken was the towne.”—

Plutarch only says, that “ the sunne was darkened,” that “ diverse men were seen going up and down in fire;” there were “ fires in the element; sprites were seene running up and downe in the night, and solitarie birds sitting in the great market-place.”

The disagreeable recurrence of the word *stars* in the second line induces me to believe that *As stars* in that which precedes, is a corruption. Perhaps Shakspeare wrote:

Astres with trains of fire,—

————— *and dewes of blood*

Disastrous dimm’d the sun.

The word *astre* is used in an old collection of poems entitled *Diana*, addressed to the Earl of Oxenforde, a book of which I know not the date, but believe it was printed about 1580. In *Othello* we have *antres*, a word exactly of a similar formation.

MALONE.

The word—*astre* (which is no where else to be found) was affectedly taken from the French by John Southern, author of the poems cited by Mr. Malone. This wretched plagiarist stands indebted both for his verbiage and his imagery to *Ronsard*. See the *European Magazine*, for June, 1788, p. 389. STEEVENS.

^a ——— *and the moist star, &c.*] i. e. the moon. So, in Marlowe’s *Hero and Leander*, 1598:

“ Not that night-wand’ring, pale, and watry star,” &c.

MALONE.

^a *And even—*] Not only such prodigies have been seen in Rome, but the elements have shown our countrymen like forerunners and foretokens of violent events. JOHNSON.

³ ——— *precurse of fierce events,*] *Fierce*, for terrible.

WARBURTON.

I rather believe that *fierce* signifies *conspicuous*, *glaring*. It is used in a somewhat similar sense in *Timon of Athens*:

“ O the *fierce* wretchedness that glory brings!”

Again, in *King Henry VIII.* we have “ *fierce* vanities.”

STEEVENS.

And prologue to the omen coming on,⁴—
Have heaven and earth together démonstrated
Unto our climatures and countrymen.—]

Re-enter Ghost.

But, soft; behold! lo, where it comes again!
I'll cross it, though it blast me.—Stay, illusion!
If thou hast any sound,⁶ or use of voice,

⁴ *And prologue to the omen coming on,*] But *prologue* and *omen* are merely synonymous here. The poet means, that these strange *phenomena* are prologues and forerunners of the events *presag'd*: and such sense the slight alteration, which I have ventured to make, by changing *omen* to *omen'd*, very aptly gives. THEOBALD.

Omen, for fate. WARBURTON.

Hammer follows Theobald.

A distich from the life of Merlin, by Heywood, however, will show that there is no occasion for correction:

“*Merlin well vers'd in many a hidden spell,*

“*His countries omen did long since foretell.*” FARMER.

Again, in *The Fowbreaker*:

“*And much I fear the weakness of her braine*

“*Should draw her to some ominous exigent.*”

Omen, I believe, is danger. STEEVENS.

And even the like precursor of fierce events,

As harbingers preceding still the fates,

And prologue to the omen coming on,] So, in one of our author's poems:

“*But thou shrieking harbinger*

“*Foul precursor of the fiend,*

“*Anger of the fever's end,*” &c.

The omen coming on is, the approaching dreadful and portentous event. So, in *King Richard III*:

“*Thy name is ominous to children.*”

i. e. (not boding ill fortune, but) *destructive* to children.

Again, *ibidem*:

“*O Pomfret, Pomfret, O, thou bloody prison,*

“*Fatal and ominous to noble peers.*” MALONE.

⁶ *If thou hast any sound,*] The speech of Horatio to the spectre is very elegant and noble, and congruous to the common traditions of the causes of apparitions. JOHNSON.

Speak to me:

If there be any good thing to be done,
That may to thee do ease, and grace to me,
Speak to me:

If thou art privy to thy country's fate,
Which, happily, foreknowing may avoid,
O, speak!

Or, if thou hast uphoarded⁷ in thy life
Extorted treasure in the womb of earth,
For which, they say, you spirits oft walk in death,
[Cock crows.]

Speak of it:—stay, and speak.—Stop it, Marcellus.

MAR. Shall I strike at it with my partizan?

HOR. Do, if it will not stand.⁸

BER.

'Tis here!

HOR.

'Tis here!

⁷ Or, if thou hast uphoarded &c.] So, in Decker's *Knight's Conjuring*, &c. "—— If any of them had bound the spirit of gold by any charmes in caves, or in iron fetters under the ground, they should for their own soules quiet (which questionlesse else would revolve up and down) if not for the good of their children, release it."

STEEVENS.

⁸ —— Stop it, Marcellus.——

HOR. *Do, if it will not stand.*] I am unwilling to suppose that Shakspeare could appropriate these absurd effusions to *Horatio*, who is a scholar, and has sufficiently proved his good understanding by the propriety of his addresses to the phantom. Such a man therefore must have known that

"As easy might he the intrenchant air

"With his keen sword impress,"

as commit any act of violence on the royal shadow. The words—*Stop it, Marcellus*,—and *Do, if it will not stand*—better suit the next speaker, *Bernardo*, who, in the true spirit of an unlettered officer, *nihil non arroget armis*. Perhaps the first idea that occurs to a man of this description, is to strike at what offends him. Nicholas Pouffin, in his celebrated picture of the Crucifixion, has introduced a similar occurrence. While lots are casting for the sacred vesture, the graves are giving up their dead. This prodigy is perceived by one of the soldiers, who instantly grasps his sword, as if preparing to defend himself, or resent such an invasion from the other world.

MAR. 'Tis gone! [Exit Ghost.
We do it wrong, being so majesticall,
To offer it the show of violence;
For it is, as the air, invulnerable,⁸
And our vain blows malicious mockery.

BER. It was about to speak, when the cock crew.

HOR. And then it started, like a guilty thing
Upon a fearful summons. I have heard,
The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,⁹
Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat
Awake the god of day; and, at his warning,
Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,¹

The two next speeches—'Tis here!—'Tis here!—may be allotted to *Marcellus and Bernardo*; and the third—'Tis gone! &c. to *Horatio*, whose superiority of character indeed seems to demand it.—As the text now stands, *Marcellus* proposes to strike the Ghost with his partizan, and yet afterwards is made to descant on the indecorum and impotence of such an attempt.

The names of speakers have so often been confounded by the first publishers of our author, that I suggest this change with less hesitation than I should express concerning any conjecture that could operate to the disadvantage of his words or meaning.—Had the assignment of the old copies been such, would it have been thought liable to objection? STEEVENS.

⁸ — *it is, as the air, invulnerable,*] So, in *Macbeth*:

“As easy may’st thou the intrenchant air

“With thy keen sword impress.”

Again, in *King John*:

“Against the invulnerable clouds of heaven.” MALONE.

⁹ *The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,*] So, the quarto, 1604. Folio—to the day.

In *England's Parnassus*, 8vo. 1600, I find the two following lines ascribed to Drayton, but know not in which of his poems they are found:

“And now the cocke, the morning's trumpeter,

“Play'd huntsup for the day-star to appear.”

Mr. Gray has imitated our poet:

“The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,

“No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.”

MALONE.

¹ *Whether in sea &c.*] According to the pneumatology of

The extravagant⁴ and erring spirit hies

that time, every element was inhabited by its peculiar order of spirits, who had dispositions different, according to their various places of abode. The meaning therefore is, that all *spirits extravagant*, wandering out of their element, whether aerial spirits visiting earth, or earthly spirits ranging the air, return to their station, to their proper limits in which they are *confined*. We might read:

“ — And at his warning
 “ Th’ extravagant and erring spirit hies
 “ To his confine, whether in sea or air,
 “ Or earth, or fire. And of,” &c.

But this change, though it would smooth the construction, is not necessary, and, being unnecessary, should not be made against authority. JOHNSON.

A Chorus in Andreini’s drama, called *Adamo*, written in 1613, consists of spirits of fire, air, water, and hell, or subterraneous, being the exiled angels. “Choro di Spiriti ignei, aerei, asquatici, ed infernali,” &c. These are the demons to which Shakspeare alludes. These spirits were supposed to controul the elements in which they respectively resided; and when formally invoked or commanded by a magician, to produce tempests, conflagrations, floods, and earthquakes. For thus says *The Spanish Mandevile of Miracles*, &c. 1600: “Those which are in the middle region of the ayre, and those that are under them nearer the earth, are those, which sometimes out of the ordinary operation of nature doe moove the windes with greater fury than they are accustomed; and do, out of season, congeele the cloudes, causing it to thunder, lighten, hayle, and to destroy the grasse, corne, &c. &c.—Witches and negromancers worke many such like things by the help of those spirits,” &c. *Ibid.* Of this schoole therefore was Shakspeare’s Prospero in *The Tempest*. T. WARTON.

Bourne of Newcastle, in his *Antiquities of the common People*, informs us, “It is a received tradition among the vulgar, that at the time of cock-crowing, the midnight spirits forsake these lower regions, and, go to their proper places.—Hence it is, (says he) that in country places, where the way of life requires more early labour, they always go chearfully to work at that time; whereas if they are called abroad sooner, they imagine every thing they see, a wandering ghost.” And he quotes on this occasion, as all his predecessors had done, the well-known lines from the first hymn of *Prudentius*. I know not whose translation he gives us, but there is an old one by Heywood. The *pious chansons*, the *hymns* and *carrols*, which Shakspeare mentions presently, were usually copied from the elder Christian poets. FARMER.

To his confine: and of the truth herein
This present object made probation.

MAR. It faded on the crowing of the cock.⁴
Some say, that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
This bird of dawning singeth all night long:
And then, they say, no spirit dares stir abroad;⁵
The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,
No fairy takes,⁷ nor witch hath power to charm,
So hallow'd and so gracious is the time.

⁴ *The extravagant* —] i. e. got out of his bounds.

WARBURTON.

So, in *Nobody and Somebody*, 1598: " — they took me up for
a '*stravagant*.'"

Shakspeare imputes the same effect to *Aurora's harbinger* in the
last scene of the third act of the *Midsummer Night's Dream*. See
Vol. V. p. 112. STEEVENS.

⁵ *It faded on the crowing of the cock.*] This is a very ancient
superstition. Philostratus giving an account of the apparition of
Achilles' shade to Apollonius Tyanæus, says that it vanished with
a little glimmer as soon as the cock crowed. Vit. Apol. iv. 16.

STEEVENS.

Faded has here its original sense; it *vanished*. *Vado*, Lat. So,
in Spenser's *Faery Queen*, Book I. c. v. st. 15:

" He stands amazed how he thence should *fade*."

That our author uses the word in this sense, appears from the
following lines:

" — The morning cock *crew* loud;

" And at the sound it shrunk in haste away,

" And *vanish'd* from our sight." MALONE.

⁶ — dares stir abroad;] Thus the quarto. The folio reads—
can walk. STEEVENS.

Spirit was formerly used as a monosyllable: *sprite*. The quarto,
1604, has—*dare* stir abroad. Perhaps Shakspeare wrote—no *spirits*
dare stir abroad. The necessary correction was made in a late
quarto of no authority, printed in 1637. MALONE.

⁷ *No fairy takes,*] No fairy *strikes* with lameness or diseases.
This sense of *take* is frequent in this author. JOHNSON.

So, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*:

" And there he blaits the tree, and *takes* the cattle."

STEEVENS.

HOR. So have I heard, and do in part believe it.
 But, look, the morn, in ruffet mantle clad,
 Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill:^a
 Break we our watch up; and, by my advice,
 Let us impart what we have seen to-night
 Unto young Hamlet; for, upon my life,
 This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him:
 Do you consent we shall acquaint him with it,
 As needful in our loves, fitting our duty?

MAR. Let's do't, I pray; and I this morning
 know
 Where we shall find him most convenient.

[*Exeunt.*

^a — *big eastern hill*:] The old quarto has it better *eastward*.
 WARBURTON.

The superiority of the latter of these readings is not, to me at least, very apparent. I find the former used in *Lingua*, &c. 1607:

" — and overclimbs

" Yonder gilt *eastern* hills."

Again, in Browne's *Britannia's Pastorals*, Book IV. Sat. iv. p. 75, edit. 1616:

" And ere the sunne had clymb'd the *easterne* hills."

Eastern and *eastward*, alike signify *toward the east*.

STEEVENS,

SCENE II.

The same. A Room of State in the same.

Enter the King, Queen, HAMLET, POLONIUS, LAERTES, VOLTIMAND, CORNELIUS, Lords, and Attendants.

KING. Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death

The memory be green; and that it us befitted⁹
To bear our hearts in grief, and our whole kingdom
To be contracted in one brow of woe;
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature,
That we with wisest sorrow think on him,
Together with remembrance of ourselves.
Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,
The imperial jointress of this warlike state,
Have we, as 'twere, with a defeated joy,—
With one auspicious, and one dropping eye;^a

⁹ ——— *and that it us befitted* —] Perhaps our author elliptically wrote,

——— *and us befitted* —.

i. e. and *that it befitted* us. STEEVENS.

^a *With one auspicious, and one dropping eye;*] Thus the folio. The quarto, with somewhat less of quaintness:

With an auspicious, and a dropping eye.

The same thought, however, occurs in *The Winter's Tale*: "She had *one eye* declined for the loss of her husband; *another* elevated that the oracle was fulfilled."

After all, perhaps, we have here only the ancient proverbial phrase—"To cry with one eye and laugh with the other," buckram'd by our author for the service of tragedy. See *Ray's Collection*, edit. 1768, p. 188. STEEVENS.

Dropping in this line probably means *depressed* or cast downwards: an interpretation which is strongly supported by the passage already quoted from *The Winter's Tale*. It may, however, signify *weeping*.

With mirth in funeral, and with dirge in marriage,
In equal scale weighing delight and dole,—
Taken to wife: nor have we herein barr'd
Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone
With this affair along:—For all, our thanks.

Now follows, that you know, young Fortinbras,—
Holding a weak supposal of our worth;
Or thinking, by our late dear brother's death,
Our state to be disjoint and out of frame,
Collegued with this dream of his advantage,³
He hath not fail'd to pester us with message,
Importing the surrender of those lands
Lost by his father, with all bands of law,
To our most valiant brother.—So much for him.
Now for ourself, and for this time of meeting.
Thus much the business is: We have here writ
To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras,—
Who, impotent and bed-rid, scarcely hears
Of this his nephew's purpose,—to suppress
His further gait herein;⁴ in that the levies,

"*Dropping of the eyes*" was a technical expression in our author's time.—"If the spring be wet with much south wind,—the next summer will happen agues and blindness, *dropping of the eyes*, and pains of the bowels." Hopton's *Concordance of years*, 8vo. 1616.

Again, in Montaigne's *Essays*, 1603: "—they never saw any man there—with eyes *dropping*, or crooked and stooping through age." MALONE.

³ Collegued *with this dream of his advantage*,] The meaning is,—He goes to war so indiscreetly, and unprepared, that he has no allies to support him but a *dream*, with which he is *collegued* or confederated. WARBURTON.

Mr. Theobald, in his *Shakspeare Restored*, proposed to read—*collogued*, but in his edition very properly adhered to the ancient copies. MALONE.

This dream of his advantage (as Mr. M. Mason observes) means only "this imaginary advantage, which Fortinbras hoped to derive from the unsettled state of the kingdom." STEEVENS.

⁴ ——— *to suppress*

His further gait herein,] Gate or gait is here used in the

PRINCE OF DENMARK. 27

The lifts, and full proportions, are all made
Out of his subject:—and we here despatch
You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltimand,
For bearers of this greeting to old Norway;
Giving to you no further personal power
To business with the king, more than the scope⁵
Of these dilated articles⁶ allow.
Farewell; and let your haste commend your duty.

COR. VOL. In that, and all things, will we show
our duty.

KING. We doubt it nothing; heartily farewell.
[*Exeunt VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS.*]

And now, Laertes, what's the news with you?
You told us of some suit; What is't, Laertes?
You cannot speak of reason to the Dane,
And lose your voice: What would'st thou beg,
Laertes,
That shall not be my offer, not thy asking?
The head is not more native to the heart,
The hand more instrumental to the mouth,

northern sense, for *proceeding, passage*; from the A. S. verb *gac*.
A *gate* for a path, passage, or street, is still current in the north.
PERCY.

⁵ — *more than the scope* —] More is comprized in the general
design of these articles, which you may explain in a more diffuse
and dilated style. JOHNSON.

⁶ — *these dilated articles &c.*] i. e. the articles when dilated.
MUSGRAVE.

The poet should have written *allows*. Many writers fall into
this error, when a plural noun immediately precedes the verb; as
I have had occasion to observe in a note on a controverted passage
in *Love's Labour's Lost*. So, in *Julius Caesar*:

"The posture of your blows are yet unknown."

Again, in *Cymbeline*: "— and the approbation of those are
wonderfully to extend him," &c. MALONE.

Surely, all such defects in our author, were merely the errors of
illiterate transcribers or printers. STEEVENS.

Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.⁷
 What would'st thou have, Laertes?

LAER. My dread lord,
 Your leave and favour to return to France;
 From whence though willingly I came to Den-
 mark,

To show my duty in your coronation;
 Yet now, I must confess, that duty done,
 My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France,
 And bow them to your gracious leave and pardon.

KING. Have you your father's leave? What says
 Polonius?

POL. He hath, my lord, [wrung from me my slow
 leave,⁸

By laboursome petition; and, at last,
 Upon his will I seal'd my hard consent:]
 I do beseech you, give him leave to go.

KING. Take thy fair hour, Laertes; time be thine,
 And thy best graces: spend it at thy will.⁹—

⁷ *The head is not more native to the heart,
 The hand more instrumental to the mouth,*

Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.] The sense seems to be this: The head is not formed to be more useful to the heart, the hand is not more at the service of the mouth, than my power is at your father's service. That is, he may command me to the utmost, he may do what he pleases with my kingly authority.

STEEVENS.

By *native to the heart* Dr. Johnson understands, “natural and congenial to it, born with it, and co-operating with it.”

Formerly the heart was supposed the seat of wisdom; and hence the poet speaks of the close connexion between the heart and head. See Vol. XII. p. 12, n. 9. MALONE.

⁸ — [wrung from me my slow leave,] These words and the two following lines are omitted in the folio. MALONE.

⁹ *Take thy fair hour, Laertes; time be thine,*

And thy best graces: spend it at thy will.] The sense is,—You have my leave to go, Laertes; make the fairest use you please of your time, and spend it at your will with the fairest graces you are master of.” THEOBALD.

But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son,—

HAM. A little more than kin, and less than kind.*
[*Aside.*

So, in *King Henry VIII*:

“ ——— and bear the inventory

“ Of your *best* *graces* in your mind. STEEVENS.

I rather think this line is in want of emendation. I read :

————— *time is thine,*

And my best *graces* : *spend it at thy will.* JOHNSON.

* Ham. *A little more than kin, and less than kind.*] *Kind* is the Teutonic word for *child*. Hamlet therefore answers with propriety, to the titles of *cousin* and *son*, which the king had given him, that he was somewhat more than *cousin*, and less than *son*.

JOHNSON.

In this line, with which Shakspeare introduces *Hamlet*, Dr. Johnson has perhaps pointed out a nicer distinction than it can justly boast of. To establish the sense contended for, it should have been proved that *kind* was ever used by any English writer for *child*. *A little more than kin*, is a little more than a common relation. The king was certainly something *less than kind*, by having betrayed the mother of Hamlet into an indecent and incestuous marriage, and obtained the crown by means which he suspects to be unjustifiable. In the fifth act, the prince accuses his uncle of having *popp'd in between the election and his hopes*, which obviates Dr. Warburton's objection to the old reading, viz. that “ the king had given no occasion for such a reflection.”

A jingle of the same sort is found in *Mother Bombie*, 1594, and seems to have been proverbial, as I have met with it more than once: “ ——— the nearer we are in blood, the further we must be from love; the greater the *kindred* is, the less the *kindness* must be.”

Again, in *Gorboduc*, a tragedy, 1561:

“ In kinde a father, but not *kindlyness*.”

As *kind*, however, signifies *nature*, Hamlet may mean that his relationship was become an *unnatural* one, as it was partly founded upon incest. Our author's *Julius Cæsar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *King Richard II.* and *Titus Andronicus*, exhibit instances of *kind* being used for *nature*; and so too in this play of *Hamlet*, Act II. sc. the last:

“ Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, *kindless* villain.”

Dr. Farmer, however, observes that *kin*, is still used for *cousin* in the midland counties. STEEVENS.

Hamlet does not, I think, mean to say, as Mr. Steevens supposes,

KING. How is it that the clouds still hang on—
you?

HAM. Not so, my lord, I am too much i'the sun.—

QUEEN. Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour—
off,

And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark—

Do not, for ever, with thy veiled lids⁴

Seek for thy noble father in the dust:

Thou know'st, 'tis common; all, that live, must⁵
die,⁵

Passing through nature to eternity.

HAM. Ay, madam, it is common.

that *his uncle* is a little more than kin, &c. The King had called the prince—"My cousin Hamlet, and my son."—His reply, therefore, is,—“I am a little more than thy kinsman, [for I am thy stepson;] and somewhat less than kind to thee, [for I hate thee, as being the person who has entered into an incestuous marriage with my mother]. Or, if we understand *kind* in its ancient sense, then the meaning will be,—*I am more than thy kinsman, for I am thy step-son*; being such, *I am less near to thee than thy natural offspring*, and therefore not entitled to the appellation of *son*, which you have now given me. MALONE.

³ — *too much i'the sun.*] He perhaps alludes to the proverb, “Out of heaven's blessing into the warm sun.” JOHNSON.

— *too much i'the sun.*] Meaning probably his being sent for from his studies to be exposed at his uncle's marriage as his *chiefest courtier*, &c. STEEVENS.

I question whether a quibble between *sun* and *son* be not here intended. FARMER.

⁴ — *veiled lids*—] With lowering eyes, cast down eyes.

JOHNSON.

So, in *The Merchant of Venice*:

“Vailing her high-top lower than her ribs.” STEEVENS,

See Vol. IX. p. 17, n. 4. MALONE.

⁵ *Thou know'st, 'tis common; all, that live, must die,*] Perhaps the semicolon placed in this line, is improper. The sense, elliptically expressed, is,—Thou knowest it is common *that* all that live, must die.—The first *that* is omitted for the sake of metre, a practice often followed by Shakspeare. STEEVENS.

QUEEN. If it be,
Why seems it so particular with thee?

HAM. Seems, madam! nay, it is; I know not
seems.

'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
Nor customary suits of solemn black,
Nor windy suspiration of forc'd breath,
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
Nor the dejected haviour of the visage,
Together with all forms, modes, shows of grief,⁶
That can denote me truly: These, indeed, seem,
For they are actions that a man might play:
But I have that within, which passeth show;
These, but the trappings and the suits of woe.⁷

KING. 'Tis sweet and commendable in your na-
ture, Hamlet,
To give these mourning duties to your father:
But, you must know, your father lost a father;
That father lost, lost his;⁸ and the survivor bound

⁶ — shows of grief,] Thus the folio. The first quarto reads—
dopes—I suppose for shapes. STEEVENS.

⁷ But I have that within, which passeth show;
These, but the trappings and the suits of woe.] So, in *King
Richard II*:

“ — my grief lies all within;
“ And these external manners of lament
“ Are merely shadows to the unseen grief
“ That swells with silence in the tortur'd soul.”

MALONE.

⁸ — your father lost a father;
That father lost, lost his;] Mr. Pope judiciously corrected the
faulty copies thus:

— your father lost a father;
That father, his; —

On which the editor Mr. Theobald thus descants:—*This supposed
refinement is from Mr. Pope, but all the editions else, that I have met
with, old and modern, read,*

That father lost, lost his; —
The reduplication of which word here gives an energy and an

In filial obligation, for some term
 To do obsequious sorrow:⁹ But to persevere
 In obstinate condolment,² is a course
 Of impious stubbornness; 'tis unmanly grief:
 It shows a will most incorrect³ to heaven;
 A heart unfortified, or mind impatient;
 An understanding simple and unschool'd:
 For what, we know, must be, and is as common
 As any the most vulgar thing to sense,
 Why should we, in our peevish opposition,
 Take it to heart? Fie! 'tis a fault to heaven,
 A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,

elegance, which is much easier to be conceived than explained in terms. I believe so: for when explained in terms it comes to this:—That father after he had lost himself, lost his father. But the reading is ex fide codicis, and that is enough.

WARBURTON.

I do not admire the repetition of the word, but it has so much of our author's manner, that I find no temptation to recede from the old copies. JOHNSON.

The meaning of the passage is no more than this,—*Your father lost a father*, i. e. your grandfather, which *lost grandfather*, also lost his father.

The metre, however, in my opinion, shows that Mr. Pope's correction should be adopted. The sense, though elliptically expressed, will still be the same. STEEVENS.

⁹ — obsequious sorrow:] *Obsequious* is here from *obsequies*, or funeral ceremonies. JOHNSON.

So, in *Titus Andronicus*:

“To shed obsequious tears upon his trunk.”

See Vol. X. p. 471, n. 2. STEEVENS.

² In obstinate condolment,] *Condolment*, for *sorrow*.

WARBURTON.

³ — a will most incorrect—] *Incorrect*, for *untutor'd*.

WARBURTON.

Incorrect does not mean *untutored*, as Warburton explains it; but *ill-regulated*, not sufficiently subdued. M. MASON.

Not sufficiently regulated by a sense of duty and submission to the dispensations of providence. MALONE.

To reason most absurd;⁴ whose common theme
Is death of fathers, and who still hath cry'd,
From the first corse, till he that died to-day,
This must be so. We pray you, throw to earth
This unprevailing woe; and think of us
As of a father: for let the world take note,
You are the most immediate to our throne;
And, with no less nobility of love,⁵
Than that which dearest father bears his son,
Do I impart toward you.⁶ For your intent

⁴ *To reason most absurd;*] *Reason* is here used in its common sense, for the *faculty* by which we form conclusions from arguments.
JOHNSON.

⁵ *And, with no less nobility of love,*] *Nobility*, for *magnitude*.
WARBURTON.

Nobility is rather *generosity*. JOHNSON.

By nobility of love, Mr. Heath understands, eminence and distinction of love. MALONE.

So, afterwards, the Ghost, describing his affection for the Queen:

"To me, whose love was that of dignity" &c. STEEVENS.

Do I impart toward you.] I believe *impart* is, *impart myself*, communicate whatever I can bestow. JOHNSON.

The crown of Denmark was elective. So, in *Sir Clyomon Knight of the Golden Shield*, &c. 1599:

"And me possess for spoused wife, who in *election* am

"To have the crown of Denmark here, as heir unto the same."

The king means, that as Hamlet stands the fairest chance to be next elected, he will strive with as much love to ensure the crown to him, as a father would show in the continuance of heirdom to a son. STEEVENS.

I agree with Mr. Steevens, that the crown of Denmark (as in most of the Gothick kingdoms) was elective, and not hereditary; though it might be customary, in elections, to pay some attention to the royal blood, which by degrees produced hereditary succession. Why then do the rest of the commentators so often treat Claudius as an *usurper*, who had deprived young Hamlet of his right by *beirship* to his father's crown? Hamlet calls him drunkard, murderer, and villain; one who had carried the election by low and mean practices; had

"Popp'd in between the election and my hopes——"

In going back to school in Wittenberg,⁷
 It is most retrograde to our desire :
 And, we beseech you, bend you to remain⁸
 Here, in the cheer and comfort of our eye,
 Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.

QUEEN. Let not thy mother lose her prayers —
 Hamlet ;

I pray thee, stay with us, go not to Wittenberg.

HAM. I shall in all my best obey you, madam.

KING. Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply ;
 Be as ourself in Denmark.—Madam, come ;
 This gentle and unforc'd accord of Hamlet

had

“ From a shelf the precious diadem stole,

“ And put it in his pocket :”

but never hints at his being an *usurper*. His discontent arose from his uncle's being preferred before him, not from any legal right which he pretended to set up to the crown. Some regard was probably had to the recommendation of the preceding prince, in electing the successor. And therefore young Hamlet had “ the voice of the king himself for his succession in Denmark ;” and he at his own death prophesies that “ the election would light on Fortinbras, who had his dying voice,” conceiving that by the death of his uncle, he himself had been king for an instant, and had therefore a right to recommend. When, in the fourth act, the rabble wished to choose Laertes king, I understand that antiquity was forgot, and custom violated, by electing a new king in the life-time of the old one, and perhaps also by the calling in a stranger to the royal blood. BLACKSTONE.

⁷ —to school in Wittenberg,] In Shakspeare's time there was an university at Wittenberg, to which he has made Hamlet propose to return.

The university of Wittenberg was not founded till 1502, consequently did not exist in the time to which this play is referred.

MALONE.

Our author may have derived his knowledge of this famous university from *The Life of Iacke Wilton*, 1594, or *The History of Doctor Faustus*, of whom the *second report* (printed in the same year) is said to be “ written by an English gentleman, student in Wittenberg, an University of Germany in Saxony.” RITSON.

⁸ —bend you to remain—] i. e. subdue your inclination to go from hence, and remain, &c. STEEVENS.

Sits smiling to my heart :¹ in grace whereof,
 No jocund health,² that Denmark drinks to-day,
 But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell;
 And the king's rouse³ the heaven shall bruit again,
 Re-speaking earthly thunder. Come away.

[*Exeunt King, Queen, Lords, &c.* POLONIUS,
 and LAERTES.

HAM. O, that this too too solid flesh would melt,
 Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew!⁴
 Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd
 His canon 'gainst self-slaughter!⁴ O God! O God!

¹ *Sits smiling to my heart:*] Thus, the dying Lothario:

"That sweet revenge comes smiling to my thoughts."

STEEVENS.

Sits smiling to my heart:] Surely it should be—

Sits smiling on my heart. RITSON.

To my heart, I believe, signifies—*near to, close, next to*, my heart.

STEEVENS.

² *No jocund health,*] The king's intemperance is very strongly implied; every thing that happens to him gives him occasion to drink. JOHNSON.

³ — *the king's rouse*—] i. e. the king's draught of jollity. See *Othello*, Act II. sc. iii. STEEVENS.

So, in Marlowe's *Tragical Historie of Doctor Faustus*:

"He took his rouse with stoopes of Rhenish wine." RITSON.

⁴ — *resolve itself into a dew!*] *Resolve* means the same as *dissolve*. Ben Jonson uses the word in his *Volpone*, and in the same sense:

"Forth the resolved corners of his eyes."

Again, in *The Country Girl*, 1647:

"— my sworn grief, resolved in these tears." STEEVENS.

⁴ *Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd*

His canon 'gainst self-slaughter!] The generality of the editions read—*cannon*, as if the poet's thought were,—*Or that the Almighty had not planted his artillery, or arms of vengeance, against self-murder*. But the word which I restored (and which was espoused by the accurate Mr. Hughes, who gave an edition of this play) is the true reading, i. e. *that he had not restrained suicide by his express law and peremptory prohibition*. THEOBALD.

There are yet those who suppose the old reading to be the true

How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
 Seem to me all the uses of this world!
 Fie on't! O fie! 'tis an unweeded garden,
 That grows to feed; things rank, and gross in nature,
 Possess it merely.⁵ That it should come to this!
 But two months dead!—nay, not so much, not
 two:
 So excellent a king; that was, to this,
 Hyperion to a satyr:⁶ so loving to my mother,

one, as they say the word *fixed* seems to decide very strongly in its favour. I would advise such to recollect Virgil's expression:

“ — *fixit leges pretio, atque refixit.*” STEEVENS.

If the true reading wanted any support, it might be found in *Cymbeline*:

“ — *'gainst self slaughter*

“ There is a *prohibition* so divine,

“ That cravens my weak hand.”

In Shakspeare's time *canon* (*norma*) was commonly spelt *cannon*.

MALONE.

⁵ — *merely.*] is *entirely, absolutely*. See Vol. III. p. 9, n. 5; and Vol. XII. p. 131, n. 6. STEEVENS.

⁶ *So excellent a king; that was, to this,*

Hyperion to a satyr:] This similitude at first sight seems to be a little far-fetched; but it has an exquisite beauty. By the *Satyr* is meant *Pan*, as by *Hyperion*, *Apollo*. *Pan* and *Apollo* were brothers, and the allusion is to the contention between those gods for the preference in musick. WARBURTON.

All our English poets are guilty of the same false quantity, and call Hyperion Hyperion; at least the only instance I have met with to the contrary, is in the old play of *Fuimus Troes*, 1633:

“ — Blow gentle Africus,

“ Play on our poops, when Hyperion's son

“ Shall couch in west.”

Shakspeare, I believe, has no allusion in the present instance, except to the beauty of Apollo, and its immediate opposite, the deformity of a Satyr. STEEVENS.

Hyperion or Apollo is represented in all the ancient statues, &c. as exquisitely beautiful, the satyrs hideously ugly.—Shakspeare may surely be pardoned for not attending to the *quantity* of Latin names, here and in *Cymbeline*; when we find Henry Parrot, the

That he might not beteem the winds of heaven
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!

author of a collection of epigrams printed in 1613, to which a Latin preface is prefixed, writing thus:

"*Posthumus*, not the last of many more,

"Asks why I write in such an idle vaine," &c.

Laquei ridiculosi, or Springs for Woodcocks, 16mo. sign. c. 3.

MALONE.

7 That he might not beteem the winds of heaven—] In former editions:

That be permitted not the winds of heaven—.

This is a sophisticated reading, copied from the players in some of the modern editions, for want of understanding the poet, whose text is corrupt in the old impressions: all of which that I have had the fortune to see, concur in reading:

—so loving to my mother,

That be might not beteene the winds of heaven

Visit her face too roughly.

Beteene is a corruption without doubt, but not so inveterate a one, but that, by the change of a single letter, and the separation of two words mistakenly jumbled together, I am verily persuaded, I have retrieved the poet's reading—

That be might not let e'en the winds of heaven &c.

THEOBALD.

The obsolete and corrupted verb—*beteene*, (in the first folio) which should be written (as in all the quartos) *beteeme*, was changed, as above, by Mr. Theobald; and with the aptitude of his conjecture succeeding critics appear to have been satisfied.

Beteeme, however, occurs in the tenth book of Arthur Golding's version of Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, 4to. 1587; and, from the corresponding Latin, must necessarily signify, to vouchsafe, deign, permit, or suffer:

"— Yet could he not *beteeme*

"The shape of anie other bird than egle for to seeme.

Sign. R. 1. b.

"— nulla tamen alite verti

"*Dignatur*, nisi quæ possit sua fulmina ferre." V. 157.

Jupiter (though anxious for the possession of Ganymede) would not *deign* to assume a meaner form, or *suffer* change into an humbler shape, than that of the august and vigorous fowl who bears the thunder in his pounces.

The existence and signification of the verb *beteem* being thus established, it follows, that the attention of Hamlet's father to his queen was exactly such as is described in the Enterlude of the

Must I remember? why, she would hang on him,
As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on: And yet, within a month,—
Let me not think on't;—Frailty, thy name is wo—
man!—

A little month; or ere those shoes were old,
With which she follow'd my poor father's body,
Like Niobe, all tears;⁸—why she, even she,—
O heaven! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,
Would have mourn'd longer,—marry'd with my
uncle,

My father's brother; but no more like my father,
Than I to Hercules: Within a month;

Life and Repentance of Marie Magdalaine, &c. by Lewis Wager,
4to. 1567:

“ But evermore they were unto me very tender,

“ They ~~would not suffer the wynde on me to blowe.~~”

I have therefore replaced the ancient reading, without the slightest hesitation, in the text.

This note was inserted by me in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, some years before Mr. Malone's edition of our author (in which the same justification of the old reading—*beteene*, occurs,) had made its appearance. STEEVENS.

This passage ought to be a perpetual memento to all future editors and commentators to proceed with the utmost caution in emendation, and never to discard a word from the text, merely because it is not the language of the present day.

Mr. Hughes or Mr. Rowe, supposing the text to be unintelligible, for *beteene* boldly substituted *permitted*. Mr. Theobald, in order to favour his own emendation, stated untruly that *all* the old copies which he had seen, read *beteene*. His emendation appearing uncommonly happy, was adopted by all the subsequent editors.

We find a sentiment similar to that before us, in Marston's *Insatiate Countess*, 1603:

“ ——— she had a lord,

“ Jealous that air should ravish her chaste looks.”

MALONE.

⁸ *Like Niobe, all tears;*] Shakspeare might have caught this idea from an ancient ballad intitled *The falling out of Lovers is the renewing of Love*:

“ Now I, like weeping *Niobe*,

“ May wash my handes in teares,” &c.

Of this ballad *Amantium iræ* &c. is the burden. STEEVENS.

Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,
She marry'd :—O most wicked speed, to post
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!
It is not, nor it cannot come to, good ;
But break, my heart ; for I must hold my tongue !

Enter HORATIO, BERNARDO, and MARCELLUS.

HOR. Hail to your lordship !

HAM. I am glad to see you well :
Horatio,—or I do forget myself.

HOR. The same, my lord, and your poor servant
ever.

HAM. Sir, my good friend ; I'll change that name⁹
with you.

And what make you¹ from Wittenberg, Horatio ?—
Marcellus ?

MAR. My good lord,——

HAM. I am very glad to see you ; good even, sir.³—
But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg ?

⁹ — *I'll change that name*—] I'll be your servant, you shall
be my friend. JOHNSON.

¹ — *what make you*—] A familiar phrase for *what are you
doing*. JOHNSON.

See Vol. VI. p. 7, n. 5. STEEVENS.

³ — *good even, sir.*] So the copies. Sir Thomas Hanmer
and Dr. Warburton put it—*good morning*. The alteration is of no
importance, but all licence is dangerous. There is no need of any
change. Between the first and eighth scene of this act it is apparent,
that a natural day must pass, and how much of it is already over,
there is nothing that can determine. The king has held a council.
It may now as well be *evening* as *morning*. JOHNSON.

The change made by Sir T. Hanmer might be justified by what
Marcellus said of Hamlet at the conclusion of scene i:

“ —and I this *morning* know

“ Where we shall find him most convenient.” STEEVENS.

HOR. A truant disposition, good my lord.

HAM. I would not hear your enemy say so;
Nor shall you do mine ear that violence,
To make it truster of your own report
Against yourself: I know, you are no truant.
But what is your affair in Elsinore?
We'll teach you to drink deep, ere you depart.

HOR. My lord, I came to see your father's funeral.

HAM. I pray thee, do not mock me, fellow—
student;
I think, it was to see my mother's wedding.

HOR. Indeed, my lord, it follow'd hard upon.

HAM. Thrift, thrift, Horatio! the funeral bak'd
meats⁴

Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.
'Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven'

⁴ — *the funeral bak'd meats*—] It was anciently the general custom to give a cold entertainment to mourners at a funeral. In distant counties this practice is continued among the yeomanry. See *The Tragique Historie of the Faire Valeria of London*, 1598: "His corpes was with funerall pompe conveyed to the church, and there solemnly enterred, nothing omitted which necessitie or custom could claime; a sermon, a banquet, and like observations." Again, in the old romance of *Syr Degore*, bl. l. no date:

"A great feast would he holde

"Upon his quenes mornynge day,

"That was buryed in an abbay." COLLINS.

See also Hayward's *Life and Raigne of King Henrie the Fourth*, 4to. 1599, p. 135: "Then hee [King Richard II.] was conveyed to Langley Abby in Buckinghamshire,—and there obscurely interred,—without the charge of a dinner for celebrating the funeral."

MALONE.

⁵ — *dearest foe in heaven* —] *Dearest* for *direst*, most dreadful, most dangerous. JOHNSON.

Dearest is most immediate, consequential, important. So, in *Romeo and Juliet*:

"—a ring that I must use

"In dear employment."

Or ever⁶ I had seen that day, Horatio!—
My father,—Methinks, I see my father.

HOR. Where,
My lord?

HAM. In my mind's eye,⁷ Horatio.

HOR. I saw him once, he was a goodly king.

HAM. He was a man, take him for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again.⁸

HOR. My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

HAM. Saw! who?

HOR. My lord, the king your father.

Again, in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Maid in the Mill*:

"You meet your dearest enemy in love,
"With all his hate about him." STEEVENS.

See Vol. XI. p. 650, n. 7. MALONE.

⁶ Or ever—] Thus the quarto, 1604. The folio reads—*ere*
ever, This is not the only instance in which a familiar phraseology
has been substituted for one more ancient, in that valuable copy.

MALONE.

⁷ In my mind's eye,] This expression occurs again in our author's
Rape of Lucrece:

"——himself behind

"Was left unseen, save to the eye of mind."

Ben Jonson has borrowed it in his Masque called *Love's Triumph*
through Callipolis:

"As only by the mind's eye may be seen."

Telemachus lamenting the absence of Ulysses, is represented in like
manner:

'Οὐτιμὸς πατρί' ἰσθλὸν ἐνὶ φρεσίν. *Odys.* L. I. 115. STEEVENS.

This expression occurs again in our author's 113th Sonnet:

"Since I left you, mine eye is in my mind." MALONE.

⁸ I shall not look upon his like again.] Mr. Holt proposes to read
from a emendation of Sir Thomas Samwell, Bart. of Upton, near
Northampton:

Eye shall not look upon his like again;

and thinks it is more in the true spirit of Shakspeare than the other.
So, in Stowe's *Chronicle*, p. 746: "In the greatest pomp that ever
ye behelde." Again, in Sandys's *Travels*, p. 150: "We went this
day through the most pregnant and pleasant valley that ever eye be-
held." STEEVENS.

HAM. The king my father!

HOR. Season your admiration⁹ for a while
With an attent ear;² till I may deliver,
Upon the witness of these gentlemen,
This marvel to you.

HAM. For God's love, let me hear.

HOR. Two nights together had these gentlemen,
Marcellus and Bernardo, on their watch,
In the dead waist and middle of the night,³
Been thus encounter'd. A figure like your father,
Armed at point,⁴ exactly, cap-à-pé,
Appears before them, and, with solemn march,
Goes slow and stately by them: thrice he walk'd,
By their oppress'd and fear-surprized eyes,
Within his truncheon's length; whilst they, dis-
till'd

⁹ Season your admiration—] That is, temper it. JOHNSON.

² With an attent ear;] Spenser, as well as our poet, uses *attent* for *attentive*. MALONE.

³ In the dead waist and middle of the night,] This strange phraseology seems to have been common in the time of Shakspeare. By *waist* is meant nothing more than *middle*; and hence the epithet *dead* did not appear incongruous to our poet. So, in Marston's *Malecontent*, 1604:

“ 'Tis now about the immodest *waist* of *night*.”

i. e. midnight. Again, in *The Puritan*, a comedy, 1607: “ — ere the day be spent to the *girdle*, —.”

In the old copies the word is spelt *waist*, as it is in the second act, sc. ii: “ Then you live about her *waist*, or in the middle of her favours.” The same spelling is found in *King Lear*, Act IV. sc. vi: “ Down from the *waist*, they are centaurs.” See also Minshew's Dict. 1617: “ *Waist, middle, or girdle-steed*.” We have the same pleonasm in another line in this play:

“ And given my heart a working *mute* and *dumb*.”

All the modern editors read—In the dead *waiste* &c. MALONE.

Dead waist may be the true reading. See Vol. III. p. 36, n. 4. STEEVENS.

⁴ Armed at point,] Thus the quartos. The folio:
Arm'd at all points. STEEVENS.

Almost to jelly with the act of fear,⁵
Stand dumb and speak not to him. This to me
In dreadful secrecy impart they did ;
And I with them, the third night, kept the watch :
Where, as they had deliver'd, both in time,
Form of the thing, each word made true and good,
The apparition comes : I knew your father ;
These hands are not more like.

HAM. But where was this ?

MAR. My lord, upon the platform where we
watch'd.

HAM. Did you not speak to it ?⁶

⁵ ——— *with the act of fear,*] Fear was the cause, the active cause that diffused them by that force of operation which we strictly call *act* in voluntary, and *power* in involuntary agents, but popularly call *act* in both. JOHNSON.

The folio reads—*bestil'd*. STEEVENS.

⁶ *Did you not speak to it ?*] Fielding, 'who was well acquainted with vulgar superstitions, in his *Tom Jones*, B. XI. ch. ii. observes that Mrs. Fitzpatrick, "like a ghost, only wanted to be spoke to," but then very readily answered. It seems from this passage, as well as from others in books too mean to be formally quoted, that spectres were supposed to maintain an obdurate silence, till interrogated by the people to whom they appeared.

The drift therefore of Hamlet's question is, whether his father's shade had been spoken to ; and not whether Horatio, as a particular or privileged person, was the speaker to it. Horatio tells us he had seen the late king but once, and therefore cannot be imagined to have any particular interest with his apparition.

The vulgar notion that a ghost could only be spoken to with propriety and effect by a scholar, agrees very well with the character of Marcellus, a common officer ; but it would have disgraced the Prince of Denmark to have supposed the spectre would more readily comply with Horatio's solicitation, merely because it was that of a man who had been studying at a university.

We are at liberty to think the Ghost would have replied to Francisco, Bernardo, or Marcellus, had either of them ventured to question it. It was actually preparing to address Horatio, when the cock crew. The convenience of Shakspeare's play, however, required that the phantom should continue dumb, till Hamlet could

HOR. My lord, I did;
 But answer made it none: yet once, methought,
 It lifted up its head, and did address
 Itself to motion, like as it would speak:
 But, even then, the morning cock crew loud;¹
 And at the sound it shrunk in haste away,
 And vanish'd from our sight.

HAM. 'Tis very strange.

HOR. As I do live, my honour'd lord, 'tis true;
 And we did think it writ down in our duty,
 To let you know of it.

be introduced to hear what was to remain concealed in his own breast, or to be communicated by him to some intelligent friend, like Horatio, in whom he could implicitly confide.

By what particular person therefore an apparition which exhibits itself only for the purpose of being urged to speak, was addressed, could be of no consequence.

Be it remembered likewise, that the words are not as lately pronounced on the stage,—“Did not *you* speak to it?”—but—“Did you not *speak* to it?”—How awkward will the innovated sense appear, if attempted to be produced from the passage as it really stands in the true copies!

Did you not speak to it?

The emphasis, therefore, should most certainly rest on—*speak*.

STEEVENS.

¹ — *the morning cock crew loud*]; The moment of the evanescence of spirits was supposed to be limited to the crowing of the cock. This belief is mentioned so early as by Prudentius, *Catbem. Hymn.* I. v. 40. But some of his commentators prove it to be of much higher antiquity.

It is a most inimitable circumstance in Shakspeare, so to have managed this popular idea, as to make the Ghost, which has been so long obstinately silent, and of course must be dismissed by the morning, begin or rather prepare to speak, and to be interrupted, at the very critical time of the crowing of a cock.

Another poet, according to custom, would have suffered his ghost tamely to vanish, without contriving this start, which is like a start of guilt. To say nothing of the aggravation of the future suspense, occasioned by this preparation to speak, and to impart some mysterious secret. Less would have been expected, had nothing been promised. T. WARTON.

PRINCE OF DENMARK. 45

HAM. Indeed, indeed, firs, but this troubles me.
Hold you the watch to-night?

ALL. We do, my lord.

HAM. Arm'd, say you?

ALL. Arm'd, my lord.

HAM. From top to toe?

ALL. My lord, from head to foot.

HAM. Then saw you not
His face.

HOR. O, yes, my lord; he wore his beaver up.*

HAM. What, look'd he frowningly?

HOR. A countenance more
In sorrow than in anger.

HAM. Pale, or red?

HOR. Nay, very pale.

HAM. And fix'd his eyes upon you?

HOR. Most constantly.

HAM. I would, I had been there.

HOR. It would have much amaz'd you.

HAM. Very like,
Very like: Stay'd it long?

HOR. While one with moderate haste might tell
a hundred.

MAR. BER. Longer, longer.

HOR. Not when I saw it.

* — *wore his beaver up.*] Though *beaver* properly signified that part of the helmet which was *let down*, to enable the wearer to drink, Shakspeare always uses the word as denoting that part of the helmet which, when raised up, exposed the face of the wearer: and such was the popular signification of the word in his time. In Bullokar's *English Expofitor*, 8vo. 1616, *beaver* is defined thus:—“In armour it fignifies that part of the helmet which may be *lifted up*, to take breath the more freely.” MALONE.

HAM. His beard was grizzl'd? no?

HOR. It was, as I have seen it in his life,
A fable silver'd.⁹

HAM. I will watch to-night;
Perchance, 'twill walk again.

HOR. I warrant, it will.

HAM. If it assume my noble father's person,
I'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape,
And bid me hold my peace. I pray you all,
If you have hitherto conceal'd this fight,
Let it be tenable in your silence still;²
And whatsoever else shall hap to-night,
Give it an understanding, but no tongue;
I will requite your loves: So, fare you well:
Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve,
I'll visit you.

ALL. Our duty to your honour.

HAM. Your loves, as mine to you: Farewell.

[*Exeunt HORATIO, MARCELLUS, and BERNARDO.*]

My father's spirit in arms!³ all is not well;
I doubt some foul play: 'would, the night were
come!

Till then sit still, my soul: Foul deeds will rise,
Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes.
[*Exit.*]

⁹ *A fable silver'd.*] So, in our poet's 12th sonnet:

"And fable curls, all silver'd o'er with white." MALONE.

² *Let it be tenable in your silence still;*] Thus the quartos, and rightly. The folio, 1623, reads—*treble*. STEEVENS.

³ *My father's spirit in arms!*] From what went before, I once hinted to Mr. Garrick, that these words might be spoken in this manner:

My father's spirit! in arms! all is not well;—

WHALLEY.

S C E N E III.

*A Room in Polonius' House.**Enter LAERTES and OPHELIA.*

LAER. My necessaries are embark'd; farewell:
And, sister, as the winds give-benefit,
And convoy is assistant, do not sleep,
But let me hear from you.

OPH. Do you doubt that?

LAER. For Hamlet, and the trifling of his favour,
Hold it a fashion, and a toy in blood;
A violet in the youth of primy nature,
Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting,
The perfume and suppliance of a minute;⁴
No more.

OPH. No more but so?

LAER. Think it no more:
For nature, crescent, does not grow alone

⁴ *The perfume and suppliance of a minute;*] Thus the quarto: the folio has it:

————— *sweet, not lasting,*

The suppliance of a minute.

It is plain that *perfume* is necessary to exemplify the idea of *sweet, not lasting*. With the word *suppliance* I am not satisfied, and yet dare hardly offer what I imagine to be right. I suspect that *souffiance*, or some such word, formed from the Italian, was then used for the act of fumigating with sweet scents. JOHNSON.

The perfume and suppliance of a minute; i. e. what is supplied to us for a minute; or, as Mr. M. Mason supposes, "an amusement to fill up a vacant moment, and render it agreeable." STEEVENS.

The words—*perfume and*, which are found in the quarto, 1604, were omitted in the folio. MALONE.

In thews,⁵ and bulk; but, as this temple waxes,
 The inward service of the mind and soul
 Grows wide withal. Perhaps, he loves you now;
 And now no foil, nor cautel, doth besmirch
 The virtue of his will:⁶ but, you must fear,
 His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own;
 For he himself is subject to his birth:⁷
 He may not, as unvalued persons do,
 Carve for himself; for on his choice depends
 The safety and the health of the whole state;⁸

⁵ *In thews,*] i. e. in sinews, muscular strength. So, in *King Henry IV.* Part II: "Care I for the limb, the *thews*, the stature," &c. See Vol. IX. p. 137, n. 7. STEEVENS.

⁶ *And now no foil, nor cautel, doth besmirch*

The virtue of his will:] From *cautela*, which signifies only a prudent foresight or caution; but, passing through French hands, it lost its innocence, and now signifies fraud, deceit. And so he uses the adjective in *Julius Cæsar*:

"Swear priests and cowards, and men *cautelous*."

WARBURTON.

So, in the second part of Greene's *Art of Coneycatching*, 1592: "—— and their subtil *cautels* to amend the statute." *To amend the statute*, was the cant phrase for evading the law. STEEVENS.

Cautel is subtlety or deceit. Minshew in his Dictionary, 1617, defines it, "A crafty way to deceive." The word is again used by Shakspeare in *A Lover's Complaint*:

"In him a plenitude of subtle matter,

"Applied to *cautels*, all strange forms receives."

MALONE.

Virtue seems here to comprise both excellence and power, and may be explained the pure effect. JOHNSON.

The virtue of his will means, his virtuous intentions. *Cautel* means craft. So, Coriolanus says:

"—— be caught by *cautelous* baits and practice."

M. MASON.

⁷ *For he himself &c.*] This line is not in the quarto.

MALONE.

⁸ *The safety and the health of the whole state;*] Thus the quarto, 1604, except that it has—*this* whole state, and the second *the* is inadvertently omitted. The folio reads:

The sanctity and health of the whole state.

This is another proof of arbitrary alterations being sometimes

And therefore must his choice be circumscrib'd
Unto the voice and yielding of that body,
Whereof he is the head : Then if he says, he loves
you,

It fits your wisdom so far to believe it,
As he in his particular act and place
May give his saying deed ;⁹ which is no further,
Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal.
Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain,
If with too credent ear you list his songs ;
Or lose your heart ; or your chaste treasure open
To his unmaster'd² importunity.
Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister ;
And keep you in the rear of your affection,³
Out of the shot and danger of desire.
The chariest maid⁴ is prodigal enough,
If she unmask her beauty to the moon :
Virtue itself scapes not calumnious strokes :
The canker galls the infants of the spring,
Too oft before their buttons be disclos'd ;
And in the morn and liquid dew of youth
Contagious blastments are most imminent.

made in the folio. The editor, finding the metre defective, in consequence of the article being omitted before *health*, instead of supplying it, for *safety* substituted a word of three syllables.

MALONE.

⁹ *May give his saying deed ;*] So, in *Timon of Athens* : “ — the deed of saying is quite out of use.” Again, in *Troilus and Cressida* : “ Speaking in deeds, and deedless in his tongue.”

MALONE.

² — unmaster'd —] i. e. *licentious*. JOHNSON.

³ — keep you in the rear &c.] That is, do not advance so far as your affection would lead you. JOHNSON.

⁴ *The chariest maid* —] *Chary* is cautious. So, in Greene's *Never too Late*, 1616 : “ Love requires not chastity, but that her soldiers be *chary*.” Again, “ She liveth chafly enough, that liveth *charily*.” STEEVENS.

Be wary then : best safety lies in fear ;
Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.

OPH. I shall the effect of this good lesson keep
As watchman to my heart : But, good my brother,
Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven ;
Whilst, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
And recks not his own read.⁴

LAER. O, fear me not.
I stay too long ;—But here my father comes.

Enter POLONIUS.

A double blessing is a double grace ;
Occasion smiles upon a second leave.

POL. Yet here, Laertes ! aboard, aboard, for
shame ;
The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,⁵

⁴ ——— recks *not his own* read.] That is, heeds not his own lessons. POPE.

So, in the old Morality of *Hycke Scorne* :

“ ——— I *reck* not a feder.”

Again, *ibidem* :

“ And of thy living, I *reed* amend thee.”

Ben Jonson uses the word *reed* in his *Cataline* :

“ So that thou could’st not move

“ Against a publick *reed*.”

Again, in Sir Tho. North’s translation of Plutarch : “ ——— Dispatch, I *read* you, for your enterprize is betray’d.” Again, the old proverb, in the *Two angry Women of Abington*, 1599 :

“ Take heed, is a good *reed*.”

i. e. good *counsel*, good *advice*. STEEVENS.

So, Sternhold, *Psalms* i :

“ ——— that hath not lent

“ To wicked *rede* his ear.” BLACKSTONE.

⁵ ——— *the shoulder of your sail*,] This is a common sea phrase.
STEEVENS.

And you are staid for: There,—my blessing with
 you; [*Laying his hand on LAERTES' head.*
 And these few precepts in thy memory
 Look thou character.⁶ Give thy thoughts no tongue,
 Nor any unproportion'd thought his act.
 Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.
 The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
 Grapple them to thy soul with hooks of steel;⁷
 But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
 Of each new-hatch'd, unfledg'd comrade.⁸ Beware

⁶ *And these few precepts in thy memory*

Look thou character.] i. e. write; strongly infix. The same phrase is again used by our author in his 122d Sonnet:

“ ——— thy tables are within my brain

“ Full character'd with lasting memory.”

Again, in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*:

“ ——— I do conjure thee,

“ Who art the table wherein all my thoughts

“ Are visibly character'd and engrav'd.” MALONE.

⁷ *Grapple them to thy soul with hooks of steel;*] The old copies read—with *books* of steel. I have no doubt that this was a corruption in the original quarto of 1604, arising, like many others, from similitude of sounds. The emendation, which was made by Mr. Pope, and adopted by three subsequent editors, is strongly supported by the word *grapple*. See Minshew's Dictionary, 1617: “To *hook* or *grapple*, viz. to grapple and to board a ship.”

A *grapple* is an instrument with several *books* to lay hold of a ship, in order to board it.

This correction is also justified by our poet's 137th Sonnet:

“ Why of eyes' falshood hast thou forged *books*,

“ Whereto the judgement of my heart is ty'd?”

It may be also observed, that *books* are sometimes made of steel, but *books* never. MALONE.

We have, however, in *King Henry IV.* P. II:

“ A *book* of gold to bind thy brothers in.”

The former part of the phrase occurs also in *Macbeth*:

“ Grapples you to the heart and love of us.” STEVENS.

⁸ *But do not dull thy palm with entertainment*

Of each new-hatch'd, unfledg'd comrade.] The literal sense is,

Of entrance to a quarrel ; but, being in,
 Bear it that the opposer may beware of thee.
 Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice :
 Take each man's censure,⁹ but reserve thy judge-
 ment.

Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
 But not express'd in fancy ; rich, not gaudy :
 For the apparel oft proclaims the man ;
 And they in France, of the best rank and station,
 Are most select and generous, chief in that.²

Do not make thy palm callous by shaking every man by the hand. The figurative meaning may be, Do not by promiscuous conversation make thy mind insensible to the difference of characters. JOHNSON.

⁹ — each man's censure.] *Censure* is opinion. So, in *King Henry VI.* P. II:

“ The king is old enough to give his *censure*.” STEEVENS.

² *Are most select and generous, chief in that.*] I think the whole design of the precept shows we should read :

Are most select, and generous chief, in that.

Chief may be an adjective used adverbially, a practice common to our author : chiefly generous. Yet it must be owned that the punctuation recommended is very stiff and harsh.

I would, however, more willingly read :

And they in France, of the best rank and station,

Select and generous, are most choice in that.

Let the reader, who can discover the slightest approach towards sense, harmony, or metre, in the original line,—

Are of a most select and generous chief, in that,—

adhere to the old copies. STEEVENS.

The genuine meaning of the passage requires us to point the line thus :

“ Are most select and generous, chief in that.”

i. e. the nobility of France are select and generous above all other nations, and chiefly in the point of apparel ; the richness and elegance of their dress. RITSON.

Are of a most select and generous chief, in that.] Thus the quarto, 1604, and the folio, except that in that copy the word *chief* is spelt *cheff*. The substantive *chief*, which signifies in heraldry the upper part of the shield, appears to have been in common use in Shakespeare's time, being found in Minshew's Dictionary, 1617. He defines it thus : “ *Est superior et scuti nobilior pars ; tertiam partem*

Neither a borrower, nor a lender be :
 For loan oft loses both itself and friend ;
 And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.³
 This above all,—To thine ownself be true ;
 And it must follow, as the night the day,⁴
 Thou canst not then be false to any man.
 Farewell ; my blessing season this in thee !⁵

ejus obtinet ; ante Christi adventum dabatur in maximi bonoris signum ; senatoribus et honoratis viris." B. Jonson has used the word in his *Postaster*.

The meaning then seems to be, *They in France approve themselves of a most select and generous escutcheon by their dress.* Generous is used with the signification of *generosus*. So, in *Othello* : "The generous islanders," &c.

Chief, however, may have been used as a substantive, for *note* or *estimation*, without any allusion to heraldry, though the word was perhaps originally *heraldick*. So, in Bacon's *Colours of Good and Evil*, 16mo. 1597 : "In the warmer climates the people are generally more wise, but in the northern climates the wits of *chief* are greater."

If *chief* in this sense had not been familiarly understood, the editor of the folio must have considered the line as unintelligible, and would have probably omitted the words—*of a* in the beginning of it, or attempted some other correction. That not having been done, I have adhered to the old copies.

Our poet from various passages in his works, appears to have been accurately acquainted with all the terms of heraldry.

MALONE.

Of chief, in the passage quoted from Bacon, is, I believe, a bald translation of the old French phrase—*de chef*, whatever, in the present instance, might be its intended meaning. STEEVENS.

³ — *of husbandry.*] i. e. of thrift ; æconomical prudence. See Vol. VII. p. 400, n. 4. MALONE.

⁴ *And it must follow, as the night the day,*] So, in the 145th Sonnet of Shakspeare :

"That follow'd it as gentle day

"Doth follow night," &c. STEEVENS.

⁵ — *my blessing season this in thee !*] *Season*, for *infuse*.

WARBURTON.

It is more than to *infuse*, it is to infix it in such a manner as that it never may wear out. JOHNSON.

LAER. Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

POL. The time invites you ;⁵ go, your servants tend.⁶

LAER. Farewell, Ophelia ; and remember well
What I have said to you.

OPH. 'Tis in my memory lock'd,
And you yourself shall keep the key of it.⁷

LAER. Farewell. [*Exit LAERTES.*]

POL. What is't, Ophelia, he hath said to you ?

OPH. So please you, something touching the lord
Hamlet.

POL. Marry, well bethought :
'Tis told me, he hath very oft of late
Given private time to you ; and you yourself
Have of your audience been most free and boun-
teous :

If it be so, (as so 'tis put on me,
And that in way of caution,) I must tell you,
You do not understand yourself so clearly,

So, in the mock tragedy represented before the king :

“ — who in want a hollow friend doth try,

“ Directly seasons him his enemy.” STEEVENS.

⁵ *The time invites you ;*] So, in *Macbeth* :

“ I go, and it is done, the bell invites me.” STEEVENS.

Thus the folio. The quarto, 1604, reads—The time *invests* you : which Mr. Theobald preferred, supposing that it meant, “ the time besieges, presses upon you on every side.” But to *invest*, in Shakspeare's time, only signified, to clothe, or give possession.

MALONE.

⁶ — *your servants tend.*] i. e. your servants are waiting for you. JOHNSON.

⁷ — *yourself shall keep the key of it.*] The meaning is, that your counsels are as sure of remaining locked up in my memory, as if yourself carried the key of it. So, in *Northward Hoe*, by Decker and Webster, 1607 : “ You shall close it up like a treasure of your own, and yourself shall keep the key of it.”

STEEVENS.

PRINCE OF DENMARK. 55

As it behoves my daughter, and your honour :
What is between you ? give me up the truth.

OPH. He hath, my lord, of late made many
tenders
Of his affection to me.

POL. Affection? puh! you speak like a green
girl,
Unfitted in such perilous circumstance.*
Do you believe his tenders, as you call them?

OPH. I do not know, my lord, what I should
think.

POL. Marry, I'll teach you: think yourself a
baby;
That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay,
Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more
dearly;
Or (not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,
Wranging it thus,) you'll tender me a fool.⁹

* Unfitted in such perilous circumstance.] Unfitted for untried.
Untried signifies either not tempted, or not refined; unfitted signifies
the latter only, though the sense requires the former.

WARBURTON.

It means, I believe, one who has not sufficiently considered, or
thoroughly sifted such matters. M. MASON.

I do not think that the sense requires us to understand *untempted*.
"Unfitted in" &c. means, I think, one who has not nicely *canvassed*
and examined the peril of her situation. MALONE.

⁹ ——— Tender yourself more dearly;

Or (not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,

Wranging it thus,) you'll tender me a fool.] The parenthesis is
closed at the wrong place; and we must have likewise a slight cor-
rection in the last verse. [Wranging it &c.] Polonius is racking
and playing on the word *tender*, till he thinks proper to correct him-
self for the licence; and then he would say—not farther to crack the
wind of the phrase, by *twisting* it and *contorting* it, as I have done.

WARBURTON.

I believe the word *wranging* has reference, not to the phrase,
but to Ophelia; if you go on *wranging it thus*, that is, if you can-

OPH. My lord, he hath importun'd me with love,
In honourable fashion.

POL. Ay, fashion you may call it;² go to, go to.

OPH. And hath given countenance to his speech,
my lord,
With almost all the holy vows of heaven.

POL. Ay, springes to catch woodcocks.³ I do
know,
When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul

thine to go on thus wrong. This is a mode of speaking perhaps not very grammatical, but very common; nor have the best writers refused it.

“To sinner it or saint it,”
is in Pope. And Rowe,

“—— Thus to *coy* it,
“With one who knows you too.”

The folio has it—*Roaming* it thus. That is, *letting yourself loose to such improper liberty*, But *wronging* seems to be more proper.

JOHNSON.

“See you do not *coy* it,” is in Massinger's *New Way to pay old Debts*. STEEVENS.

I have followed the punctuation of the first quarto, 1604, where the parenthesis is extended to the word *thus*, to which word the context in my apprehension clearly shews it should be carried. “Or (not to crack the wind of the poor phrase, playing upon it, and abusing it thus,) &c. So, in *The Rape of Lucrece*:

“To *wrong* the wronger, till he render right.”

The quarto, by the mistake of the compositor, reads—*Wrong* it thus. The correction was made by Mr. Pope.

——Tender *yourself* more dearly;] To *tender* is to regard with affection. So, in *King Richard II*:

“—— And so betide me,
“As well I *tender* you and all of yours.”

Again, in *The Maydes Metamorphosis*, by Lyly, 1601:

“—— if you account us for the same

“That *tender* thee, and love Apollo's name.” MALONE.

² —— fashion *you may call it*;] She uses *fashion* for *manner*, and he for a *transient practice*. JOHNSON.

³ —— *springes to catch woodcocks*.] A proverbial saying, “Every woman has a *springe to catch a woodcock*.” STEEVENS.

Lends the tongue vows: these blazes, daughter,⁴
 Giving more light than heat,—extinct in both,
 Even in their promise, as it is a making,—
 You must not take for fire. From this time,
 Be somewhat scanter of your maiden presence;
 Set your entreatments⁵ at a higher rate,
 Than a command to parley. For lord Hamlet,
 Believe so much in him, That he is young;
 And with a larger tether⁶ may he walk,
 Than may be given you: In few, Ophelia,
 Do not believe his vows: for they are brokers⁷
 Not of that die which their investments show,
 But mere implorators of unholy suits,
 Breathing like sanctified and pious bonds,⁸

⁴ — *these blazes, daughter,*] Some epithet to *blazes* was probably omitted, by the carelessness of the transcriber or compositor, in the first quarto, in consequence of which the metre is defective.

MALONE.

⁵ *Set your entreatments—*] *Entreatments* here mean *company, conversation*, from the French *entrétien*. JOHNSON.

Entreatments, I rather think, means the objects of *entreaty*; the favours for which lovers sue. In the next scene we have a word of a similar formation:

“As if it some *impartment* did desire,” &c. MALONE.

⁶ — *larger tether—*] A string to tie horses. POPE.

Tether is that string by which an animal, set to graze in grounds uninclosed, is confined within the proper limits. JOHNSON.

So, in Greene's *Card of Fancy*, 1601:—“To tye the ape and the bear in one *tedder*.” *Tether* is a string by which any animal is fastened, whether for the sake of feeding or the air.

STEEVENS.

⁷ *Do not believe his vows, for they are brokers—*] A *broker* in old English meant a *barrow* or *pimp*. See the Glossary to Gawin Douglas's translation of *Virgil*. So, in *King John*:

“This *barrow*, this *broker*,” &c.

See also Vol. XI. p. 450, n. 9. In our author's *Lover's Complaint* we again meet with the same expression, applied in the same manner:

“Know, *vows* are ever *brokers* to defiling.” MALONE.

⁸ *Breathing like sanctified and pious bonds,*] On which the editor,

The better to beguile. This is for all,—

Mr. Theobald, remarks, *Though all the editors have swallowed this reading implicitly, it is certainly corrupt; and I have been surprized how men of genius and learning could let it pass without some suspicion. What idea can we frame to ourselves of a breathing bond, or of its being sanctified and pious, &c.* But he was too hasty in framing ideas before he understood those already framed by the poet, and expressed in very plain words. Do not believe (says Polonius to his daughter) Hamlet's amorous vows made to you; which pretend religion in them (*the better to beguile*) like those sanctified and pious vows [*or bonds*] made to heaven. And why should not this pass without suspicion? **WARBURTON.**

Theobald for *bonds* substitutes *barwds*. **JOHNSON.**

Notwithstanding Warburton's elaborate explanation of this passage, I have not the least doubt but Theobald is right, and that we ought to read *barwds* instead of *bonds*. Indeed the present reading is little better than nonsense.

Polonius had called Hamlet's vows, *brokers*, but two lines before, a synonymous word to *barwds*, and the very title that Shakspeare gives to Pandarus, in his *Troilus and Cressida*. The words *implicators of unboly suits*, are an exact description of a *barwd*; and all such of them as are crafty in their trade, put on the appearance of sanctity, and are "not of that die which their investments shew."

M. MASON.

The old reading is undoubtedly the true one. Do not, says Polonius, believe his vows, for they are merely uttered for the purpose of persuading you to yield to a criminal passion, though they appear only the genuine effusions of a pure and lawful affection, and assume the semblance of those sacred engagements entered into at the altar of wedlock. The *bonds* here in our poet's thoughts were *bonds of love*. So, in his 142d Sonnet:

" ——— those lips of thine,

" That have profan'd their scarlet ornaments,

" And seal'd false *bonds of love*, as oft as mine."

Again, in *The Merchant of Venice*:

" O, ten times faster Venus pigeons fly,

" To seal *love's bonds* new made, than they are wont

" To keep obliged faith unforfeited."

" Sanctified and pious bonds," are the *true bonds of love*, or, as our poet has elsewhere expressed it,

" A contract and *eternal bond of love*."

Dr. Warburton certainly misunderstood this passage; and when he triumphantly asks "may not this pass without suspicion?" if he means his own comment, the answer is, because it is not perfectly accurate. **MALONE.**

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I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth,
Have you so slander any moment's leisure,⁹
As to give words or talk with the lord Hamlet.
Look to't, I charge you; come your ways.

OPH. I shall obey, my lord. [Exeunt.]

SCENE IV.

The Platform.

Enter HAMLET, HORATIO, and MARCELLUS.

HAM. The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold.

HOR. It is a nipping and an eager air.¹

HAM. What hour now?

HOR. I think, it lacks of twelve.

MAR. No, it is struck.

HOR. Indeed? I heard it not; it then draws near
the season,

Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.

[A flourish of trumpets, and ordnance shot off,
within.]

What does this mean, my lord?

HAM. The king doth wake to-night, and takes
his rouse,²

⁹ *I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth,*

Have you so slander any moment's leisure,] Polonius says, in plain terms, that is, not in language less elevated or embellished than before, but in terms that cannot be misunderstood: *I would not have you so disgrace your most idle moments, as not to find better employment for them than lord Hamlet's conversation.* JOHNSON.

¹ — *an eager air.*] That is, a sharp air, *aigre*, Fr. So, in a subsequent scene:

“ And curd, like eager droppings into milk.” MALONE.

² — *takes his rouse,*] A rouse is a large dose of liquor, a debauch. So, in *Othello*: “ — they have given me a rouse already.”

Keeps wassel,⁴ and the swaggering up-spring⁵ reels;
 And, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down,
 The kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out
 The triumph of his pledge.

HOR.

Is it a custom?

HAM. Ay, marry, is't:

But to my mind,—though I am native here,
 And to the manner born,—it is a custom
 More honour'd in the breach, than the observance.
 This heavy-headed revel, east and west,⁶

It should seem from the following passage in Decker's *Gul's Horn-book*, 1609, that the word *rouse* was of Danish extraction: "Teach me, thou soveraigne skinker, how to take the German's upsy freeze, the *Danish rousa*, the Switzer's stoop of rhenish," &c.

STEEVENS.

⁴ *Keeps wassel*,] See Vol. VII. p. 396, n. 4. Again, in *The Hog bath lost his Pearl*, 1614:

"By Croesus name and by his castle,

"Where winter nights he *keepeth wassel*."

i. e. devotes his nights to jollity. STEEVENS.

⁵ — the *swaggering up-spring* —] The blustering upstart.

JOHNSON.

It appears from the following passage in *Alphonso Emperor of Germany*, by Chapman, that the *up-spring* was a German dance:

"We Germans have no changes in our dances;

"An *almain* and an *up-spring*, that is all."

Spring was anciently the name of a tune, so in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Prophets*:

"— we will meet him,

"And strike him such new *springs*—."

This word is used by G. Douglas in his translation of Virgil, and, I think, by Chaucer. Again, in an old Scots proverb: "Another would play a *spring*, ere you tune your pipes." STEEVENS.

⁶ *This heavy-headed revel, east and west*,] *This heavy-headed revel makes us traduced east and west, and taxed of other nations.*

JOHNSON.

By *east and west*, as Mr. Edwards has observed, is meant, throughout the world; *from one end of it to the other*.—This and the following twenty-one lines have been restored from the quarto.

MALONE.

Makes us traduc'd, and tax'd of other nations :
 They clepe us, drunkards,⁷ and with swinish phrase
 Soil our addition; and, indeed it takes
 From our achievements, though perform'd at
 height,
 The pith and marrow of our attribute.⁸
 So, oft it chances in particular men,
 That, for some vicious mole of nature in them,
 As, in their birth, (wherein they are not guilty,
 Since nature cannot choose his origin,)⁹

⁷ *They clepe us, drunkards,*] And well our Englishmen might; for in Q. Elizabeth's time there was a *Dane* in London, of whom the following mention is made in a collection of characters entitled *Looke to it, for Ile stab ye*, no date:

“ You that will drinke *Keynaldo* unto deth,

“ The *Dane* that would carowse out of his boote.”

Mr. M. Mason adds, that “ it appears from one of Howell's letters, dated at Hamburgh in the year 1632, that the then King of Denmark had not degenerated from his jovial predecessor.—In his account of an entertainment given by his majesty to the Earl of Leicester, he tells us, that the king, after beginning thirty-five toasts, was carried away in his chair, and that all the officers of the court were drunk.” STEVENS.

See also the *Nugæ Antiquæ*, Vol. II. p. 133, for the scene of drunkenness introduced into the court of James I. by the King of Denmark, in 1606. REED.

⁸ *The pith and marrow of our attribute.*] The best and most valuable part of the praise that would be otherwise attributed to us.
 JOHNSON.

⁹ *That, for some vicious mole of nature in them,
 As, in their birth, (wherein they are not guilty,
 Since nature cannot choose his origin,]* We have the same sentiment in *The Rape of Lucrece* :

“ For marks descried in men's nativity

“ Are nature's fault, not their own infamy.”

Mr. Theobald, without necessity, altered *mole* to *mould*. The reading of the old copies is fully supported by a passage in *King John* :

“ Patch'd with foul moles, and eye-offending marks.”

MALONE.

By the o'er-growth of some complexion,²
 Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason;
 Or by some habit, that too much o'er-leavens
 The form of plausible manners;³—that these men,—
 Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect;
 Being nature's livery, or fortune's star,⁴—
 Their virtues else (be they as pure as grace,
 As infinite as man may undergo,)⁵

² ——— complexion,] i. e. humour; as sanguine, melancholy, phlegmatick, &c. WARBURTON.

The quarto, 1604, for *the* has *their*; as a few lines lower it has *his* virtues, instead of *their* virtues. The correction was made by Mr. Theobald. MALONE.

³ ——— that too much o'er-leavens

The form of plausible manners;] That intermingles too much with their manners; infects and corrupts them. See Vol. XIII. p. 123, n. 9. *Plausible* in our poet's age signified gracious, pleasing, popular. So, in *All's well that ends well*:

“ ——— his plausible words

“ He scatter'd not in ears, but grafted them,

“ To grow there, and to bear.”

Plausible, in which sense *plausible* is here used, is defined by Cawdrey in his *Alphabetical Table*, &c. 1604, “*Pleasing*, or received joyfully and willingly.” MALONE.

⁴ ——— fortune's star,] The word *star* in the text signifies a *scar* of that appearance. It is a term of *farriery*: the *white star* or mark so common on the forehead of a dark coloured horse, is usually produced by making a *scar* on the place. RITSON.

——— *fortune's star*,] Some accidental blemish, the consequence of the *overgrowth* of some complexion or humour allotted to us by fortune at our birth, or some vicious habit accidentally acquired afterwards.

Theobald, plausibly enough, would read—*fortune's scar*. The emendation may be supported by a passage in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

“ The *scars* upon your honour therefore he

“ Does pity as constrained *blemishes*,

“ Not as deserv'd.” MALONE.

⁵ *As infinite as man may undergo*,)] As large as can be accumulated upon man. JOHNSON.

So, in *Measure for Measure*:

“ To undergo such ample grace and honour,—”

STEEVENS.

Shall in the general censure take corruption
 From that particular fault : The dram of base
 Doth all the noble substance often dout,
 To his own scandal.⁶

⁶ ———— *The dram of base*

Doth all the noble substance often dout,

To his own scandal.] I once proposed to read—*Doth all the noble substance* (i. e. the sum of good qualities) *oft do out*. We should now say,—*To its own scandal*; but *his* and *its* are perpetually confounded in the old copies.

As I understand the passage, there is little difficulty in it. This is one of the phrases which at present are neither employed in writing, nor perhaps are reconcilable to propriety of language.

To do a thing out, is to *extinguish* it, or to *efface* or *obliterate* any thing painted or written.

In the first of these significations it is used by Drayton, in the 5th Canto of his *Barons' Wars* :

" Was ta'en in battle, and his eyes *out-done*."

My conjecture—*do out*, instead of *doubt*, might have received support from the pronunciation of this verb in Warwickshire, where they always say—" *dout* the candle,"—" *dout* the fire;" i. e. put out or extinguish them. The forfex by which a candle is extinguished is also there called—a *douter*.

Dout, however, is a word formed by the coalescence of two others, (*do* and *out*) like *don* for *do on*, *doff* for *do off*, both of which are used by Shakspeare.

The word in question (and with the same blunder in spelling) has already occurred in the ancient copies of *King Henry V* :

" ———— make incision in their hides,

" That their hot blood may spin in English eyes,

" And *doubt* them with superfluous courage :"

i. e. *put* or *do* them *out*. I therefore now think we should read :

Doth all the noble substance often dout, &c.

for surely it is needless to say—

——— *the noble substance of worth dout*,

because the idea of *worth* is comprehended in the epithet—*noble*.

N. B. The improvement which my former note on this passage has received, I owed, about four years ago, to the late Rev. Henry Homer, a native of Warwickshire. But as Mr. Malone appears to have been furnished with almost the same intelligence, I shall not suppress his mode of communicating it, as he may fairly plead priority in having laid it before the publick. This is the sole cause why our readers are here presented with two annotations, of

Enter Ghost.

Hor. Look, my lord, it comes!

almost similar tendency, on the same subject: for unwilling as I am to withhold justice from a dead friend, I should with equal reluctance defraud a living critick of his due. STEEVENS.

The quarto, where alone this passage is found, exhibits it thus:

————— *the dram of eale*
Doth all the noble substance of a doubt,
To his own scandal.

To *dout*, as I have already observed in a note on *King Henry V.* Vol. IX. p. 421, n. 2, signified in Shakspeare's time, and yet signifies in Devonshire and other western counties, to *do out*, to efface, to extinguish. Thus they say, "*dout* the candle,"—" *dout* the fire," &c. It is exactly formed in the same manner as to *don* (or *do on*,) which occurs so often in the writings of our poet and his contemporaries.

I have no doubt that the corruption of the text arose in the following manner. *Dout*, which I have now printed in the text, having been written by the mistake of the transcriber, *doubt*, and the word *worth* having been inadvertently omitted, the line, in the copy that went to the press, stood,

Doth all the noble substance of a doubt,——.

The editor or printer of the quarto copy, finding the line too short, and thinking *doubt* must want an article, inserted it, without attending to the context; and instead of correcting the erroneous, and supplying the true word, printed—

Doth all the noble substance of a doubt, &c.

The very same error has happened in *King Henry V.*:

"That their hot blood may spin in English eyes,

"And *doubt* them with superfluous courage:"

where *doubt* is again printed instead of *dout*.

That *worth* (which was supplied first by Mr. Theobald) was the word omitted originally in the hurry of transcription, may be fairly collected from a passage in *Cymbeline*, which fully justifies the correction made:

"————— Is she with Posthumus?

"From whose so many weights of *baseness* cannot

"A *dram* of *worth* be drawn."

This passage also adds support to the correction of the word *eale* in the first of these lines, which was likewise made by Mr. Theo-

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HAM. Angels and ministers of grace defend us!¹—

bald.—*Base* is used substantively for *baseness*: a practice not uncommon in Shakspeare. So, in *Measure for Measure*:

“ Say what thou canst, my *false* outweighs your *true*.”

Shakspeare, however, might have written—The dram of *ill*. This is nearer the corrupted word *cale*, but the passage in *Cymbeline* is in favour of the other emendation.

The meaning of the passage thus corrected is, The smallest particle of vice so blemishes the whole mass of virtue, as to erase from the minds of mankind the recollection of the numerous good qualities possessed by him who is thus blemished by a single stain, and taints his general character.

To his own scandal, means, so as to reduce the whole mass of worth to its own vicious and unsightly appearance; to translate his virtue to the likeness of vice.

His for its, is so common in Shakspeare, that every play furnishes us with examples. So, in a subsequent scene in this play:—“ than the force of honesty can translate beauty into *his* likeness.”

Again, in *Timon of Athens*:

“ When every feather sticks in *his* own wing,——.”

Again, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*:

“ Whose liquor hath this virtuous property,

“ To take from thence all error with *his* might.”

Again, in *King Richard II*:

“ That it may shew me what a face I have,

“ Since *it* is bankrupt of *his* majesty.”

So, in *Grim, the Collier of Croydon*:

“ Contented life, that gives the heart *his* ease,——.”

We meet with a sentiment somewhat similar to that before us, in *King Henry IV. P. I*:

“ —— oftentimes it doth present harsh rage,

“ Defect of manners, want of government,

“ Pride, haughtiness, opinion, and disdain;

“ The least of which, haunting a nobleman,

“ Loseth men's hearts, and leaves behind a stain

“ Upon the beauty of all parts besides,

“ Beguiling them of commendation.” MALONE.

¹ *Angels and ministers of grace defend us!* &c.] Hamlet's speech to the apparition of his father seems to consist of three parts. When first he sees the spectre, he fortifies himself with an invocation:

Angels and ministers of grace defend us!

As the spectre approaches, he deliberates with himself, and determines, that whatever it be he will venture to address it.

Be thou a spirit of health, or goblin damn'd,⁵
Bring with thee airs from heaven, or blasts from
hell,
Be thy intents wicked, or charitable,
'Thou com'st in such a questionable shape,'

*Be thou a spirit of health, or goblin damn'd,
Bring with thee airs from heaven, or blasts from hell,
Be thy intents wicked, or charitable,
Thou com'st in such a questionable shape,
That I will speak to thee. I'll call thee, &c.*

This he says while his father is advancing; he then, as he had determined, speaks to him, and calls him—*Hamlet, King, Father, Royal Dane: O! answer me.* JOHNSON.

⁸ *Be thou a spirit of health, or goblin damn'd, &c.*] So, in *Ac-
tastus his After-wit*, 1600:

" Art thou a god, a man, or else a ghost?
 " Com'ft thou from heaven, where blifs and folace dwell?
 " Or from the airie cold-engendring coaft?
 " Or from the darksome dungeon-hold of hell?

The first known edition of this play is in 1604.

The same question occurs also in the MS. known by the title of *William and the Werwolf*, in the Library of King's College, Cambridge:

" Whether thou be a gode goft in goddis name that
 speakeft,
 " Or any foul fiend fourmed in this wife,
 " And if we schul of the hent harme or gode." p. 36.

Again, in Barnaby Googe's *Fourth Eglog*:

" What soever thou art y^t thus dost com,
 " Ghoost, hagge, or fende of hell,
 " I the comaunde by hym that lyves
 " Thy name and case to tell." STEEVENS.

* ——— questionable *shape*,] By *questionable* is meant provoking question. HANMER.

So, in *Macbeth* :

"Live you, or are you aught
"That man may *question*?" JOHNSON.

Questionable, I believe, means only *propitious to conversation, easy and willing to be conversed with*. So, in *As you like it*: "An *unquestionable* spirit, which you have not." *Unquestionable* in this last instance certainly signifies *unwilling to be talked with*.

STREVENS.

That I will speak to thee; I'll call thee, Hamlet,
King, father, royal Dane: O, answer me:
Let me not burst in ignorance! but tell,
Why thy canoniz'd bones, hearfed in death,
Have burst their cerements!^a why the sepulchre,

Questionable perhaps only means *capable of being conversed with*.
To question, certainly in our author's time signified *to converse*. So,
in his *Rape of Lucrece*, 1594:

"For after supper long he *questioned*

"With modest Lucrece—."

Again, in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

"Out of our *question* wipe him."

See also Vol. XIV. p. 272, n. 5. MALONE.

^a ————— tell,

Why thy canoniz'd bones, hearfed in death,

Have burst their cerements!] Hamlet, amazed at an apparition, which, though in all ages credited, has in all ages been considered as the most wonderful and most dreadful operation of supernatural agency, enquires of the spectre, in the most emphatick terms, why he breaks the order of nature, by returning from the dead; this he asks in a very confused circumlocution, confounding in his fright the soul and body. Why, says he, have *thy bones*, which with due ceremonies have been entombed *in death*, in the common state of departed mortals, *burst* the folds in which they were embalmed? Why has the tomb, in which we saw thee quietly laid, opened his mouth, that mouth which, by its weight and stability, seemed closed for ever? The whole sentence is this: *Why dost thou appear, whom we know to be dead?* JOHNSON.

By the expression *hearfed in death* is meant, shut up and secured with all those precautions which are usually practised in preparing dead bodies for sepulture, such as the winding-sheet, shroud, coffin, &c. perhaps embalming into the bargain. So that *death* is here used, by a metonymy of the antecedent for the consequents, for the rites of death, such as are generally esteemed due, and practised with regard to dead bodies. Consequently, I understand by *cerements*, the waxed winding-sheet or winding-sheets, in which the corpse was enclosed and sown up, in order to preserve it the longer from external impressions from the humidity of the sepulchre, as embalming was intended to preserve it from internal corruption.

HEATH.

By *hearfed in death*, the poet seems to mean, *reposed and confined*

Wherein we saw thee quietly in-urn'd,¹
 Hath op'd his ponderous and marble jaws,
 To cast thee up again! What may this mean,
 That thou, dead corse, again, in complete steel,⁴
 Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon,
 Making night hideous; and we fools of nature,⁵
 So horridly to shake our disposition,⁶
 With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?
 Say, why is this? wherefore? what should we do?

HOR. It beckons you to go away with it,
 As if it some impartment did desire
 To you alone.

MAR. Look, with what courteous action

in the place of the dead. In his *Rape of Lucrece* he has again used this uncommon participle in nearly the same sense:

“Thy sea within a puddle's womb is *bearfed*,

“And not the puddle in thy sea disperfed.” MALONE.

¹ — quietly in-urn'd,] The quartos read—*interr'd*.

STEEVENS.

⁴ *That thou, dead corse, again, in complete steel,*] It is probable that Shakspeare introduced his ghost in armour, that it might appear more solemn by such a discrimination from the other characters; though it was really the custom of the Danish kings to be buried in that manner. Vide *Olaus Wormius*, cap. vii:

“Struem regi nec vestibus, nec odoribus cumulant, *sua cuique arma*, quorundam igni et equus adjicitur.”

“—sed postquam magnanimus ille Danorum rex collem sibi magnitudinis conspicuæ extruxisset, (eui post obitum regio diademate exornatum, *armis indutum*, inferendum esset cadaver,” &c.

STEEVENS.

⁵ — *we fools of nature*,] The expression is fine, as intimating we were only kept (as formerly, fools in a great family,) to make sport for nature, who lay hid only to mock and laugh at us, for our vain searches into her mysteries. WARBURTON.

— *we fools of nature* —] i. e. making us, who are the sport of nature, whose mysterious operations are beyond the reaches of our souls, &c. So, in *Romeo and Juliet*:

“O, I am *fortune's fool*.” MALONE.

⁶ — *to shake our disposition*,] *Disposition* for *frame*.

WARBURTON.

It waves you to a more removed ground :⁷
But do not go with it.

HOR. No, by no means.

HAM. It will not speak ; then I will follow it.

HOR. Do not, my lord.

HAM. Why, what should be the fear?
I do not set my life at a pin's fee ;⁸
And, for my foul, what can it do to that,
Being a thing immortal as itself?
It waves me forth again ;—I'll follow it.

HOR. What, if it tempt you toward the flood,
my lord,
Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff,
That beetles o'er his base⁹ into the sea?
And there assume some other horrible form,
Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason,²

⁷ — *a more removed ground :*] i. e. *remote*. So, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* :

“ From Athens is her house *remov'd* seven leagues.”

The first folio reads—*remote*. STEEVENS.

⁸ — *pin's fee ;*] The value of a pin. JOHNSON.

⁹ *That beetles o'er his base—*] So, in Sidney's *Arcadia*, B. I :
“ Hills lifted up their *beetle* brows, as if they would overlooke the
pleasantness of their under prospect.” STEEVENS.

That beetles o'er his base—] *That hangs o'er his base*, like what
is called a *beetle-brow*. This verb is, I believe, of our author's
coinage. MALONE.

² — *deprive your sovereignty of reason,*] i. e. your ruling
power of reason. When poets wish to invest any quality or virtue
with uncommon splendor, they do it by some allusion to regal
eminence. Thus, among the excellencies of Banquo's character,
our author distinguishes “ his *royalty* of nature,” i. e. his natural
superiority over others, his independent dignity of mind. I have
selected this instance to explain the former, because I am told that
“ *royalty* of nature” has been idly supposed to bear some allusion
to Banquo's distant prospect of the crown.

And draw you into madness? think of it:
The very place³ puts toys of desperation,⁴
Without more motive, into every brain,
That looks so many fathoms to the sea,
And hears it roar beneath.

HAM. It waves me still:—
Go on, I'll follow thee.

MAR. You shall not go, my lord.

HAM. Hold off your hands.

HOR. Be rul'd, you shall not go.

HAM. My fate cries out,
And makes each petty artery in this body
As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve.⁵—

[Ghost beckons.]

To *deprive* your sovereignty of reason, therefore does not signify to *deprive* your princely mind of rational powers, but, to take away from you the command of reason, by which man is governed.

Dr. Warburton would read *deprave*; but several proofs are given in a note to *King Lear*, Vol. XIV. p. 32, n. 7, of Shakspeare's use of the word *deprive*, which is the true reading. STEEVENS.

I believe, *deprive* in this place signifies simply to take away.

³ *The very place*—] The four following lines added from the first edition. POPE. JOHNSON.

⁴ — *puts toys of desperation*,] Toys, for whims.

WARBURTON,
⁵ *As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve*.] 'Shakspeare has again accented the word *Nemean* in this manner, in *Love's Labour's Lost*:

"Thus dost thou hear the Nemean lion roar."

Spenser, however, wrote *Neméan*, *Faery Queene*, Book V. c. i:

"Into the great Neméan lion's grove."

Our poet's conforming in this instance to Latin prosody was certainly accidental, for he and almost all the poets of his time disregarded the quantity of Latin names. So, in *Lochrine*, 1595, (though undoubtedly the production of a scholar,) we have *Amphion* instead of *Amphion*, &c. See also p. 36, n. 6. MALONE.

The true quantity of this word was rendered obvious to Shakspeare by Twine's translation of part of the *Æneid*, and Golding's version of Ovid's *Metamorphosis*. STEEVENS.

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Still am I call'd;—unhand me, gentlemen;—

[*Breaking from them.*

By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me:⁶—

I say, away:—Go on,—I'll follow thee.

[*Exeunt Ghost and HAMLET.*

HOR. He waxes desperate with imagination.

MAR. Let's follow; 'tis not fit thus to obey him.

HOR. Have after:—To what issue will this come?

MAR. Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

HOR. Heaven will direct it.⁷

MAR. Nay, let's follow him.

[*Exeunt.*

⁶ ——— *that lets me:*] To let among our old authors signifies to prevent, to hinder. It is still a word current in the law, and to be found in almost all leases. STEEVENS.

So, in *No Wit like a Woman's*, a comedy by Middleton, 1657:

“That lets her not to be your daughter now.”

MALONE.

⁷ *Heaven will direct it.*] Perhaps it may be more apposite to read “Heaven will detect it.” FARMER.

Marcellus answers Horatio's question, “To what issue will this come?” and Horatio also answers it himself with a pious resignation, “Heaven will direct it.” BLACKSTONE.

S C E N E V,

A more remote Part of the Platform.

Re-enter Ghost and HAMLET.

HAM. Whither wilt thou lead me? speak, I'll go
no further.

GHOST. Mark me.

HAM. I will.

GHOST. My hour is almost come,
When I to fulphurous and tormenting flames
Must render up myself.

HAM. Alas, poor ghost!

GHOST. Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing
To what I shall unfold.

HAM. Speak, I am bound to hear.

GHOST. So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt
hear.

HAM. What?

GHOST. I am thy father's spirit;
Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night;
And, for the day, confin'd to fast in fires,⁸

⁸ *Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night;*

And, for the day, confin'd to fast in fires,] Chaucer has a similar passage with regard to the punishments of hell, *Parson's Tale*, p. 193, Mr. Urry's edition: "And moreover the misere of hell, shall be in defaute of mete and drinke." SMITH.

Nash, in his *Pierce Penniless his Supplication to the Devil*, 1595, has the same idea: "Whether it be a place of horror, stench and darkness, where men see meat, but can get none, and are ever

Till the foul crimes, done in my days of nature,
Are burnt and purg'd away.⁹ But that I am forbid
To tell the secrets of my prison-house,

thirty," &c. Before I had read the *Persones Tale* of Chaucer, I supposed that he meant rather to drop a stroke of satire on sacerdotal luxury, than to give a serious account of the place of future torment. Chaucer, however, is as grave as Shakspeare. So, likewise at the conclusion of an ancient pamphlet called *The Wyll of the Deyll*, bl. l. no date:

"Thou shalt lye in frost and fire

"With sicknesse and hunger;" &c.

Again, in *Love's Labour's Lost*:

"—love's fasting pain." STREEVENS.

This passage requires no amendment. As spirits were supposed to feel the same desires and appetites that they had on earth, to *fast* might be considered as one of the punishments inflicted on the wicked. M. MASON.

⁹ *Are burnt and purg'd away.*] Gawin Douglas really changes the Platonic hell into the "punition of faulis in purgatory:" and it is observable, that when the ghost informs Hamlet of his doom there,

"Till the foul crimes done in his days of nature

"Are burnt and purg'd away,—"

The expression is very similar to the Bishop's. I will give you his version as concisely as I can; "It is a nedeful thyng to suffer panis and torment;—Sum in the wyndis, sum under the watter, and in the fire uthir sum: thus the mony vices—

"Contrakkit in the corpis be done away

"And purgit,"—— *Sixte Book of Eneados*, fol. p. 191, FARMER.

Shakspeare might have found this expression in *The Hyllorie of Hamlet*, bl. l. F. 2. edit. 1608: "He set fire in the foure corners of the hal, in such sort, that of all that were as then therein not one escaped away, but were forced to purge their sinnes by fire."

MALONE.

Shakspeare talks more like a Papist, than a Platonist; but the language of Bishop Douglas is that of a good Protestant:

"Thus the mony vices

"Contrakkit in the corpis be done away

"And purgit."

These are the very words of our Liturgy, in the commendatory prayer for a sick person at the point of departure, in the office for the visitation of the sick;—"Whatsoever defilements it may have contracted—being purged and done away." WHALLEY.

I could a tale unfold, whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul; freeze thy young blood;
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their
spheres;²

Thy knotted and combined locks to part,
And each particular hair to stand on end,
Like quills upon the fretful porcupine:³
But this eternal blazon must not be
To ears of flesh and blood:—Lift, lift, O lift!—
If thou didst ever thy dear father love,——

HAM. O heaven!

GHOST. Revenge his foul and most unnatural
murder.⁴

² *Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres;]* So, in our poet's 108th Sonnet:

“How have mine eyes out of their spheres been fitted,

“In the distraction of this madding fever!” MALONE.

³ — *fretful porcupine:*] The quartos read—*fearful* &c. Either epithet may serve. This animal is at once irascible and timid. The same image occurs in *The Romaunt of the Rose*, where Chaucer is describing the personage of *danger*:

“Like sharpe urchons his beere was grow.”

An *urchin* is a hedge-hog.

The old copies, however, have—*porpentine*, which is frequently written by our ancient poets instead of *porcupine*. So, in *Skialetbeia*, a collection of Epigrams, Satires, &c. 1598:

“*Porpentine*-backed, for he lies on thornes.” STEEVENS.

⁴ *Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.*] As a proof that this play was written before 1597, of which the contrary has been asserted by Mr. Holt in Dr. Johnson's Appendix, I must borrow, as usual, from Dr. Farmer: “Shakspeare is said to have been no extraordinary actor; and that the top of his performance was the Ghost in his own *Hamlet*. Yet this *chef d'oeuvre* did not please: I will give you an original stroke at it. Dr. Lodge published in the year 1596, a pamphlet called *Wit's Miserie, or the World's Madnesse*, discovering the incarnate Devils of the Age, quarto. One of these devils is, *Hate-virtue, or sorrow for another man's good successe*, who, says the doctor, is a *foule lubber*, and looks as pale as the vizard of the Ghost, which cried so miserably at the theatre, *Hamlet revenge*.” STEEVENS.

HAM. Murder?

GHOST. Murder most foul, as in the best it is;
But this most foul, strange, and unnatural.

HAM. Hasten me to know it; that I, with wings
as swift

As meditation, or the thoughts of love,⁵
May sweep to my revenge.

GHOST. I find thee apt;
And duller should'st thou be than the fat weed
That rots itself in ease on Lethe wharf,⁶

I suspect that this stroke was levelled not at Shakspeare, but at the performer of the Ghost in an older play on this subject, exhibited before 1589. See *An Attempt to ascertain the order of Shakspeare's Plays*, Vol. I. MALONE.

⁵ *As meditation, or the thoughts of love,*] This similitude is extremely beautiful. The word *meditation* is consecrated, by the *mysticks*, to signify that stretch and flight of mind which aspires to the enjoyment of the supreme good. So that Hamlet, considering with what to compare the swiftness of his revenge, chooses two of the most rapid things in nature, the ardency of divine and human passion, in an *enthusiast* and a *lover*. WARBURTON.

The comment on the word *meditation* is so ingenious, that I hope it is just. JOHNSON.

⁶ *And duller should'st thou be than the fat weed*

That rots itself in ease on Lethe wharf,] Shakspeare, apparently through ignorance, makes Roman Catholicicks of these Pagan Dames; and here gives a description of purgatory; but yet mixes it with the Pagan fable of Lethe's wharf. Whether he did it to insinuate to the zealous Protestants of his time, that the Pagan and Popish purgatory stood both upon the same footing of credibility, or whether it was by the same kind of licentious inadvertence that Michael Angelo brought Charon's bark into his picture of the Last Judgement, is not easy to decide. WARBURTON.

That rots itself in ease &c.] The quarto reads—That *rots* itself. Mr. Pope follows it. Otway has the same thought:

“ ——— like a coarse and useless dunghill weed

“ Fix'd to one spot, and *rot* just as I grow.”

The superiority of the reading of the folio is to me apparent: to be in a *crescent* state (i. e. to *rot* itself) affords an idea of activity; to *rot* better suits with the dulness and inaction to which the

Would'st thou not stir in this. Now, Hamlet,
hear:

'Tis given out, that, sleeping in my orchard,
A serpent stung me; so the whole ear of Denmark
Is by a forged process of my death
Rankly abus'd: but know, thou noble youth,
The serpent, that did sting thy father's life,
Now wears his crown.

HAM. O, my prophetick soul! my uncle!

GHOST. Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,
With witchcraft of his wit,¹ with traitorous gifts,
(O wicked wit, and gifts, that have the power
So to seduce!) won to his shameful lust
The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen:
O, Hamlet, what a falling-off was there!
From me, whose love was of that dignity,

Ghost refers. Beaumont and Fletcher have a thought somewhat
similar in *The Humorous Lieutenant*:

"This dull root pluck'd from *Lethe's* flood." STEEVENS.

That roots itself in ease &c.] Thus the quarto, 1604. The
folio reads—That *rots* itself &c. I have preferred the reading of
the original copy, because to *root itself* is a natural and easy phrase,
but "to *rot* itself," not English. Indeed in general the readings
of the original copies, when not corrupt, ought in my opinion not
to be departed from, without very strong reason. *That roots itself*
in ease, means, whose sluggish root is idly extended.

The modern editors read—*Lethe's* wharf; but the reading of
the old copy is right. So, in Sir Aston Cockain's poems, 1658,
p. 177:

"—fearing these great actions might die,

"Neglected cast all into *Lethe lake*." MALONE.

That Shakspeare supposed—*rots itself*, to be English, is evident
from his having used the same phrase in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

"—lackeying the varying tide,

"To *rot itself* with motion."

See Vol. XII. p. 447. STEEVENS.

¹ — *his* wit,] The old copies have *witts*. The subsequent
line shews that it was a misprint. MALONE.

That it went hand in hand even with the vow
 I made to her in marriage; and to decline
 Upon a wretch, whose natural gifts were poor
 To those of mine!
 But virtue, as it never will be mov'd,
 Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven;
 So lust, though to a radiant angel link'd,
 Will fate itself in a celestial bed,
 And prey on garbage.¹
 But, soft! methinks, I scent the morning air;
 Brief let me be:—Sleeping within mine orchard,²
 My custom always of the afternoon,
 Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,
 With juice of curfed hebenon in a vial,³

¹ ——— fate itself in a celestial bed,
 And prey on garbage.] The same image occurs again in
Cymbeline:

“ ——— ravening first
 “ The lamb, *longs after for the garbage.*” STEEVENS.

² ——— mine orchard,] Orchard for garden. So, in *Romeo and Juliet*:

“ The orchard walls are high, and hard to climb.”

STEEVENS.

³ With juice of curfed hebenon in a vial,] The word here used was more probably designed by a *metathesis*, either of the poet or transcriber, for *hebenon*, that is, *benbane*; of which the most common kind (*hyoscyamus niger*) is certainly *narcotick*, and perhaps, if taken in a considerable quantity, might prove poisonous. Galen calls it cold in the third degree; by which in this, as well as *opium*, he seems not to mean an actual coldness, but the power it has of benumbing the faculties. Dioscorides ascribes to it the property of producing madness (*ὑστερησις μανίας*). These qualities have been confirmed by several cases related in modern observations. In Wepfer we have a good account of the various effects of this root upon most of the members of a *convent* in Germany, who eat of it for supper by mistake, mixed with succory;—heat in the throat, giddiness, dimness of sight, and delirium. *Cicut. Aquatic.* c. xviii.

GREY.

So, in Drayton's *Barons' Wars*, p. 51:

“ The pois'ning *benbane*, and the mandrake drad.”

And in the porches of mine ears did pour
 The leperous distilment;² whose effect
 Holds such an enmity with blood of man,
 That, swift as quicksilver, it courses through
 The natural gates and alleys of the body;
 And, with a sudden vigour, it doth posset
 And curd, like eager droppings into milk,
 The thin and wholesome blood: so did it mine;
 And a most instant tetter bark'd about,
 Most lazar-like, with vile and loathsome crust,
 All my smooth body.
 Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand,
 Of life, of crown, of queen, at once despatch'd:⁴
 Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,⁵
 Unhousel'd, disappointed, unanel'd;⁶

Again, in the Philosopher's 4th Satire of Mars, by Robert Anton, 1616:

"The poison'd *benbane*, whose cold juice doth kill."

In Marlowe's *Jeru of Malta*, 1633, the word is written in a different manner:

"——the blood of Hydra, Lerna's bane,

"The juice of *bebon*, and Cocytus' breath." STEEVENS.

² *The leperous distilment*;] So, in Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*, Vol. II. p. 142: "——which being once possessed, never leaveth the patient till it hath enfeebled his state, like the qualitie of *poison distilling* through the veins even to the heart." MALONE.

Surely, the leperous *distilment* signifies the water *distilled* from *benbane*, that subsequently occasioned leprosy. STEEVENS.

⁴ —— at once despatch'd:] *Despatch'd*, for *bereft*.

WARBURTON.

⁵ *Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin*, &c.] The very words of this part of the speech are taken (as I have been informed by a gentleman of undoubted veracity) from an old *Legend of Saints*, where a man, who was accidentally drowned, is introduced as making the same complaint. STEEVENS.

⁶ *Unhousel'd, disappointed, unanel'd*;] *Unhousel'd* is without having received the sacrament.

Disappointed, as Dr. Johnson observes, "is the same as *unappointed*, and may be properly explained *unprepared*. A man well

No reckoning made, but sent to my account
With all my imperfections on my head:

furnished with things necessary for an enterprize, was said to be well appointed."

This explanation of *disappointed* may be countenanced by a quotation of Mr. Upton's from *Measure for Measure*:

"Therefore your best *appointment* make with speed."

Isabella, as Mr. Malone remarks, is the speaker, and her brother, who was condemned to die, is the person addressed.

Umanuel'd is without extreme unction.

I shall now subjoin as many notes as are necessary for the support of the first and third of these explanations. I administer the bark only, not supposing any reader will be found who is desirous to swallow the whole tree.

In the *Textus Roffensis* we meet with two of these words—"The monks offering themselves to perform all priestly functions of *benseling*, and *aveyling*." *Aveyling* is misprinted for *aneyling*.

STREVENS.

See *Mort d'Arthur*, p. iii. c. 175: "So when he was *bouscel*ed and *aneled*, and had all that a Christian man ought to have," &c.

TYRWHITT.

The subsequent extract from a very scarce and curious copy of Fabian's Chronicle, printed by Pynson, 1516, seems to remove every possibility of doubt concerning the true signification of the words *unbousel'd* and *unanel'd*. The historian speaking of Pope Innocent's having laid the whole kingdom of England under an interdict, has these words: "Of the manner of this interdiccion of this lande have I seen dyverse opynyons, as some ther be that saye that the lande was interdyted thorwly and the churchis and housys of relygyon closyd, that no where was used mase, nor dyvyne servyce, by whiche reason none of the VII sacramentis all this terme should be mynystred or occupyed, nor chyld *crystened*, nor man *confessed* nor *marryed*; but it was not so strayght. For there were dyverse placys in Englonde, which were occupyed with dyvyne servyce all that season by lycence purchaseth than or before, also chyldren were chrystened throughe all the lande and men *bouselyd* and *aneled*. Fol. 14. Septima Pars Johannis.

The Anglo-Saxon noun-substantives *busel*, (the eucharist) and *ele* (oil) are plainly the roots of these last-quoted compound adjectives—. For the meaning of the affix *an* to the last, I quote Spelman's Gloss. in loco: "Quin et dictionibus (an) adjungitur, siquidem vel *majoris notationis* gratia, vel ad *singulare aliquid*, vel *unicum demonstrandum*." Hence *aneled* should seem to signify *oiled* or *anointed* by way of eminence, i. e. having received extreme unction.

O, horrible! O, horrible! most horrible!⁷
 If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not;
 Let not the royal bed of Denmark be
 A couch for luxury⁸ and damned incest.
 But, howsoever thou pursu'st this act,
 Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive
 Against thy mother aught; leave her to heaven,
 And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,
 To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once!
 The glow-worm shows the matin to be near,
 And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire:⁹

For the confirmation of the sense given here, there is the strongest internal evidence in the passage. The historian is speaking of the VII sacraments, and he expressly names five of them, viz. baptism, marriage, auricular confession, the *eucharist*, and *extreme unction*.

The antiquary is desired to consult the edition of Fabian, printed by Pynson, 1516, because there are others, and I remember to have seen one in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, with a continuation to the end of Queen Mary, London, 1559, in which the language is much modernized. BRAND.

⁷ O, horrible! O, horrible! most horrible!] It was ingeniously hinted to me by a very learned lady, that this line seems to belong to Hamlet, in whose mouth it is a proper and natural exclamation; and who, according to the practice of the stage, may be supposed to interrupt so long a speech. JOHNSON.

⁸ A couch for luxury —] i. e. for lewdness. So, in *K. Lear*:

“To't luxury, pell-mell, for I lack soldiers.” STEEVENS.

See Vol. XI. p. 410 and 453. MALONE.

⁹ — pale his uneffectual fire:] i. e. shining without heat.

WARBURTON.

To *pale* is a verb used by Lady Elizabeth Carew, in her *Tragedy of Mariam*, 1613:

“— Death can *pale* as well

“A cheek of roses, as a cheek less bright.”

Again, in Urry's Chaucer, p. 368: “The sterre *paleth* her white cheres by the flambes of the sonne,” &c.

Uneffectual fire, I believe, rather means, fire that is no longer seen when the light of morning approaches. So, in *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, 1609:

“— like a *glow-worm*,—

“The which hath fire in darkness, none in light.”

STEEVENS.

Adieu, adieu, adieu! remember me.² [Exit.

HAM. O all you host of heaven! O earth! What else?

And shall I couple hell?—O fie!—Hold, hold, my heart;

And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,
But bear me stiffly up!—Remember thee?

Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat
In this distracted globe.⁴ Remember thee?

Yea, from the table of my memory⁵

I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,

All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,

That youth and observation copied there;

And thy commandment all alone shall live

Within the book and volume of my brain,

Unmix'd with baser matter: yes, by heaven.

O most pernicious woman!

O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain!

My tables,—meet it is, I set it down,⁶

² *Adieu, adieu, adieu!* &c.] The folio reads:

Adieu, adieu, Hamlet: remember me. STEEVENS.

³ ——— *O fie!*] These words (which hurt the measure, and from that circumstance, and their almost ludicrous turn, may be suspected as an interpolation,) are found only in the two earliest quartos, STEEVENS.

⁴ ——— *Remember thee?*

Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat

In this distracted globe.] So, in our poet's 122d Sonnet:

"Which shall above that idle rank remain,

"Beyond all dates, even to eternity;

"Or at the least, *so long as brain and heart*

"*Have faculty by nature to subsist.*" MALONE.

——— *this distracted globe.*] i. e. in this head confused with thought. STEEVENS.

⁵ *Yea, from the table of my memory* —] This expression is used by Sir Philip Sidney in his *Defence of Poesie*. MALONE.

⁶ *My tables,—meet it is, I set it down,*] This is a ridicule on the practice of the time. Hall says, in his character of the *Hypocrite*,

That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain;
At least, I am sure, it may be so in Denmark:

[Writing.

So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word;⁷

It is, *Adieu, adieu! remember me.*

I have sworn't.

HOR. [Within.] My lord, my lord,——

* He will ever sit where he may be scene best, and in the midst of the sermon pulles out his *tables* in haste, as if he feared to loose that note," &c. FARMER.

No ridicule on the practice of the time could with propriety be introduced on this occasion. Hamlet avails himself of the same caution observed by the doctor in the fifth act of *Macbeth*: "I will set down whatever comes from her, to satisfy my remembrance the more strongly."

"Dr. Farmer's remark, however, as to the frequent use of table-books, may be supported by many instances. So, in the Induction to *The Malcontent*, 1604: "I tell you I am one that hath seen this play often, and can give them intelligence for their action: I have most of the jests of it here in my *table-book*."

Again, in *Love's Sacrifice*, 1633:

"You are one loves courtship:

"You had some change of words; 'twere no lost labour

"To stuff your *table-books*."

Again, in *Antonio's Revenge*, 1602: "Balurdo draws out his *writing-tables* and writes.—

"Retort and obtuse, good words, very good words."

Again, in *Every Woman in her Humour*, 1609:

"Let your *tables* befriend your memory; write," &c.

STEEVENS.

See also *The Second Part of King Henry IV*:

"And therefore will he wipe his *tables* clean,

"And keep no tell-tale to his *memory*."

York is here speaking of the King. *Table-books* in the time of our author appear to have been used by all ranks of people. In the church they were filled with short notes of the sermon, and at the theatre with the sparkling sentences of the play. MALONE.

⁷ ——— *Now to my word*;} Hamlet alludes to the *watch-word* given every day in military service, which at this time he says is, *Adieu, adieu! remember me*. So, in *The Devil's Charter*, a tragedy, 1607:

"Now to my *watch-word*——." STEEVENS.

PRINCE OF DENMARK. 83

MAR. [*Within.*] Lord Hamlet,—

HOR. [*Within.*] Heaven secure him!

HAM. So be it!

MAR. [*Within.*] Illo, ho, ho, my lord!

HAM. Hillo, ho, ho, boy! come, bird, come.^a

Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.

MAR. How is't, my noble lord?

HOR. What news, my lord?

HAM. O, wonderful!

HOR. Good my lord, tell it.

HAM. No;

You will reveal it.

HOR. Not I, my lord, by heaven.

MAR. Nor I, my lord.

HAM. How say you then; would heart of man
once think it?—

But you'll be secret,—

HOR. MAR. Ay, by heaven, my lord.

HAM. There's ne'er a villain, dwelling in all
Denmark,

But he's an arrant knave.

^a ——— *come, bird, come.*] This is the call which falconers use to their hawk in the air, when they would have him come down to them. HANMER.

This expression is used in Marston's *Dutch Courtesan*, and by many others among the old dramatick writers.

It appears from all these passages, that it was the falconers' call, as Sir T. Hanmer has observed.

Again, in *Tyrol's Roaring Megge, planted against the Walls of Melandry*, &c. 4to. 1598:

" Yet, ere I iournie, Ile go see the kyte :

" *Come, come bird, come : pox on you, can you mute ?*"

STEVENS.

HOR. There needs no ghost, my lord, come from
the grave,
To tell us this.

HAM. Why, right; you are in the right;
And so, without more circumstance at all,
I hold it fit, that we shake hands, and part:
You, as your business, and desire, shall point you;—
For every man hath business, and desire,
Such as it is,—and, for my own poor part,
Look you, I will go pray.

HOR. These are but wild and whirling words,
my lord.

HAM. I am sorry they offend you, heartily; yes,
Faith, heartily.

HOR. There's no offence, my lord.

HAM. Yes, by saint Patrick,⁹ but there is, Ho-
ratio,
And much offence too. Touching this vision here,—
It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you:
For your desire to know what is between us,
O'er-master it as you may. And now, good friends,
As you are friends, scholars, and soldiers,
Give me one poor request.

HOR. What is't, my lord?
We will.

HAM. Never make known what you have seen
to-night.

⁹ — by saint Patrick,] How the poet comes to make Hamlet swear by *St. Patrick*, I know not. However, at this time all the whole northern world had their learning from Ireland; to which place it had retired, and there flourished under the auspices of this Saint. But it was, I suppose, only said at random; for he makes Hamlet a student of Wittenberg. *WARBURTON.*

Dean Swift's "Verses on the sudden drying-up of *St. Patrick*" Well, 1726," contain many learned allusions to the early cultivation of literature in Ireland. *NICHOLS.*

HOR. MAR. My lord, we will not.

HAM. Nay, but swear't.

HOR. In faith,

My lord, not I.

MAR. Nor I, my lord, in faith.

HAM. Upon my sword.

MAR. We have sworn, my lord, already.

HAM. Indeed, upon my sword, indeed.

GHOST. [*Beneath.*] Swear.

HAM. Ha, ha, boy! say'st thou so? art thou there, true-penny?²

Come on,—you hear this fellow in the cellarage,—Consent to swear.

HOR. Propose the oath, my lord.

HAM. Never to speak of this that you have seen, Swear by my sword.³

² ——— *true-penny?*] This word, as well as some of Hamlet's former exclamations, we find in the *Malcontent*, 1604:

“ Illo, ho, ho, ho; art there old *True-penny?*”

STEEVENS.

³ *Swear by my sword.*] Here the poet has preserved the manners of the ancient Danes, with whom it was *religion* to swear upon their swords. See *Bartholinus, De causis contempt. mort. apud Dan.*

WARBURTON.

I was once inclinable to this opinion, which is likewise well defended by Mr. Upton; but Mr. Garrick produced me a passage, I think, in *Brantome*, from which it appeared, that it was common to swear upon the sword, that is, upon the cross which the old swords always had upon the hilt. JOHNSON.

Shakspeare, it is more than probable, knew nothing of the ancient Danes, or their manners. Every extract from Dr. Farmer's pamphlet must prove as instructive to the reader as the following:

“ In the *Passus Primus* of *Pierce Plowman*,

‘ David in his daies dubbed knightes,

‘ And didd them *swere on her sword* to serve truth ever.’

“ And in *Hieronymo*, the common butt of our author, and the wits of the time, says Lorenzo to Pedringano:

GHOST. [*Beneath.*] Swear.

HAM. *Hic & ubique?* then we'll shift our ground:—

Come hither, gentlemen,
And lay your hands again upon my sword:
Swear by my sword,
Never to speak of this that you have heard.

GHOST. [*Beneath.*] Swear by his sword.

HAM. Well said, old mole! can't work i'the earth so fast?

- Swear on this *cross*, that what thou say'st is true:
- But if I prove thee perjur'd and unjust,
- This very *sword*, whereon thou took'st thine oath,
- Shall be a worker of thy tragedy."

To the authorities produced by Dr. Farmer, the following may be added from *Holinshed*, p. 664: "Warwick kissed the cross of K. Edward's sword, as it were a vow to his promise."

Again, p. 1038, it is said: "that Warwick drew out his sword, which other of the honourable and worshipful that were then present likewise did, whom he commanded, that each one should kiss other's sword, according to an ancient custom amongst men of war in time of great danger; and herewith they made a solemn vow," &c.

Again, in Decker's comedy of *Old Fortunatus*, 1600:

"He has sworn to me on the *cross* of his pure Toledo."

Again, in his *Satiromastix*: "By the *cross* of this sword and dagger, captain, you shall take it."

In the soliloquy of *Roland* addressed to his sword, the *cross* on it is not forgotten: "—— capulo eburneo candidissime, *cruce aurea splendidissime*," &c. *Turpini Hist. de Gestis Caroli Mag. cap. 22.*

Again, in an ancient MS. of which some account is given in a note on the first scene of the first act of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, the oath taken by a *master of defence* when his degree was conferred on him, is preserved, and runs as follows: "First you shall sweare (so help you God and halidome, and by all the christendome which God gave you at the fount-stone, and by the *croffe* of this sword which doth represent unto you the *croffe* which our Saviour suffered his most paynfull death upon,) that you shall upholde, maynteyne, and kepe to your power all such articles as shal be heare declared unto you, and receve in the presence of me your maister, and these the rest of the maisters my bretheren heare with me at this tyme." STEEVENS.

A worthy pioneer!—Once more remove, good friends.

HOR. O day and night, but this is wondrous strange!

HAM. And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.⁴

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

But come;—

Here, as before, never, so help you mercy!

How strange or odd so'er I bear myself,

As I, perchance, hereafter shall think meet

To put an antick disposition on,—

That you, at such times seeing me, never shall,

With arms encumber'd thus, or this head-shake,

Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,

As, *Well, well, we know*;—or, *We could, an if we would*;—or, *If we list to speak*;—or, *There be, an if they might*;—

Or such ambiguous giving out, to note

That you know aught of me :⁶—This do you swear,⁷

Spenser observes that the Irish in his time used commonly to swear by their sword. See his *View of the State of Ireland*, written in 1596. This custom, indeed, is of the highest antiquity; having prevailed, as we learn from Lucian, among the Scythians.

MALONE.

⁴ *And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.*] i. e. receive it to yourself; take it under your own roof; as much as to say, *Keep it secret*. Alluding to the laws of hospitality. Warburton.

Warburton refines too much on this passage. Hamlet means merely to request that they would seem not to know it—to be unacquainted with it. M. MASON.

⁵ — *an if they might*;] Thus the quarto. The folio reads—*an if there might*. MALONE.

⁶ *Or such ambiguous giving out, to note*

That you know aught of me:] The construction is irregular and elliptical. Swear as before, says Hamlet, that you never shall by

So grace and mercy at your most need help you!

GHOST. [*Beneath.*] Swear.

HAM. Rest, rest, perturbed spirit!⁸—So, gentlemen,

folded arms or shaking of your head intimate that a secret is lodged in your breasts; and by no ambiguous phrases denote that you know aught of me.

Shakspeare has in many other places begun to construct a sentence in one form, and ended it another. So, in *All's well that ends well*: "I would the cutting of my garments would serve the turn, or the baring of my beard; and to say it was in stratagem."

Again in the same play: "No more of this, Helena;—lest it be rather thought you affect a sorrow, than to have:" where he ought to have written *than that you have*: or, *lest you rather be thought to affect a sorrow, than to have*.

Again, *ibidem*:

"I bade her—if her fortunes ever stood

"Necessity'd to help, *that* by this token

"I would relieve her."

Again, in *The Tempest*:

"I have with such provision in mine art

"So safely order'd, that there is *no soul*—

"No, not so much perdition as an hair

"Betid to any creature in the vessel."

See also Vol. III. p. 12, n. 2; and Vol. VII. p. 60, n. 7; and p. 181, n. 3.

Having used the word *never* in the preceding part of the sentence, [that you *never* shall—] the poet considered the *negative* implied in what follows; and hence he wrote—"or—to note," instead of *nor*. MALONE.

⁷ — *This do you swear, &c.*] The folio reads,—*this not to do, swear, &c.* STEEVENS.

Swear is used here as in many other places, as a disyllable.

Here again my untutored ears revolt from a new disyllable; nor have I scrupled, like my predecessors, to supply the pronoun —*you*, which must accidentally have dropped out of a line that is imperfect without it. STEEVENS.

⁸ *Rest, rest, perturbed spirit!*] The skill displayed in Shakspeare's management of his Ghost, is too considerable to be overlooked. He has rivetted our attention to it by a succession of forcible circumstances:—by the previous report of the terrified centinels,—by the solemnity of the hour at which the phantom walks,—by its

With all my love I do commend me to you:
 And what so poor a man as Hamlet is
 May do, to express his love and friending to you,
 God willing, shall not lack. Let us go in together;
 And still your fingers on your lips, I pray.
 The time is out of joint;—O cursed spite!
 That ever I was born to set it right!
 Nay, come, let's go together. [Exeunt,

martial stride and discriminating armour, visible only *per incertam lumen*, by the glimpses of the moon,—by its long taciturnity,—by its preparation to speak, when interrupted by the morning cock,—by its mysterious reserve throughout its first scene with Hamlet,—by his resolute departure with it, and the subsequent anxiety of his attendants,—by its conducting him to a solitary angle of the platform,—by its voice from beneath the earth,—and by its unexpected burst on us in the closet.

Hamlet's late interview with the spectre, must in particular be regarded as a stroke of dramatick artifice. The phantom might have told his story in the presence of the officers and Horatio, and yet have rendered itself as inaudible to them, as afterwards to the Queen. But suspense was our poet's object; and never was it more effectually created, than in the present instance. Six times has the royal semblance appeared, but till now has been withheld from speaking. For this event we have waited with impatient curiosity, unaccompanied by lassitude, or remitted attention.

The Ghost in this tragedy, is allowed to be the genuine product of Shakspeare's strong imagination. When he afterwards avails himself of traditional phantoms, as in *Julius Cæsar*, and *King Richard III.* they are but inefficacious pageants; nay, the apparition of Banquo is a mute exhibitor. Perhaps our poet despaired to equal the vigour of his early conceptions on the subject of preternatural beings, and therefore allotted them no further eminence in his dramas; or was unwilling to diminish the power of his principal shade, by an injudicious repetition of congenial images,

STEEVENS.

The verb *perturb* is used by Holinshed, and by Bacon in his *Essay on Superstition*: "—therefore atheism did never *perturb* states." MALONE.

ACT II. SCENE I.

A Room in Polonius's House.

*Enter POLONIUS and REYNALDO.*⁹

POL. Give him this money, and these notes, Reynaldo.

REY. I will, my lord.

POL. You shall do marvellous wisely, good Reynaldo,

Before you visit him, to make inquiry
Of his behaviour.

REY. My lord, I did intend it.

POL. Marry, well said: very well said.² Look
you, sir,

Inquire me first what Danfers³ are in Paris;
And how, and who, what means, and where they
keep,

What company, at what expence; and finding,
By this encompassment and drift of question,
That they do know my son, come you more nearer
Than your particular demands will touch it:⁴

⁹ *Enter Polonius and Reynaldo.] The quartos read—Enter old Polonius with his man or two. STEEVENS.*

² *—well said: very well said.] Thus also, the weak and tedious Shallow says to Bardolph, in the Second Part of King Henry IV. Act III. sc. ii: “It is well said, sir; and it is well said indeed too.” STEEVENS.*

³ *—Danfers—] Danske (in Warner’s Albion’s England) the ancient name of Denmark. STEEVENS.*

⁴ *—come you more nearer Than your particular demands will touch it:] The late editors read, and point, thus:*

PRINCE OF DENMARK. 91

Take you, as 'twere, some distant knowledge of him;

As thus,—*I know his father, and his friends,
And, in part, him*;—Do you mark this, Reynaldo?

RER. Ay, very well, my lord.

POL. *And, in part, him*;—*but*, you may say,—*not well*:

*But, if't be he I mean, he's very wild;
Addicted so and so*;—and there put on him
What forgeries you please; marry, none so rank
As may dishonour him; take heed of that;
But, sir, such wanton, wild, and usual slips,
As are companions noted and most known
To youth and liberty.

RER. As gaming, my lord.

POL. Ay, or drinking, fencing, swearing,⁵ quarrelling,

Drabbing:—You may go so far.

RER. My lord, that would dishonour him.

POL. 'Faith, no; as you may season it in the charge.⁶

—*come you more nearer*;

Then your particular demands will touch it:

Throughout the old copies the word which we now write—*than*, is constantly written—*iben*. I have therefore printed—*iban*, which the context seems to me to require, though the old copies have *iben*. There is no point after the word *nearer*, either in the original quarto, 1604, or the folio. MALONE.

⁵ — [*drinking, fencing, swearing*,] I suppose, by *fencing* is meant a too diligent frequentation of the fencing-school, a resort of violent and lawless young men. JOHNSON.

Fencing, I suppose, means, piquing himself on his skill in the use of the sword, and quarrelling and brawling, in consequence of that skill. "The cunning of *fencers*, says Gosson in his *Schoole of Abuse*, 1579, is now applied to *quarrelling*: they thinke themselves no men, if for stirring of a straw, they prove not their valure upon some bodies sicke." MALONE.

⁶ 'Faith, no; as you may season it &c.] The quarto reads—*Faith, as you may season it in the charge*. MALONE.

You must not put another scandal on him,⁷
 That he is open to incontinency;
 That's not my meaning:⁸ but breathe his faults so
 quaintly,
 That they may seem the taints of liberty:
 The flash and out-break of a fiery mind;
 A savageness⁹ in unreclaimed blood,
 Of general assault,¹⁰

REY. But, my good lord,—

POL. Wherefore should you do this?

REY. Ay, my lord,

I would know that.

POL. Marry, sir, here's my drift;
 And, I believe, it is a fetch of warrant:¹¹
 You laying these slight follies on my son,
 As 'twere a thing a little soil'd i'the working,
 Mark you,
 Your party in converse, him you would sound,
 Having ever seen, in the prenominate crimes,¹²
 The youth you breathe of, guilty, be assur'd,
 He closes with you in this consequence;

⁷ — another *scandal on him*,] Thus the old editions. Mr. Theobald reads,—*an utter*. JOHNSON.

— another *scandal*—] i. e. a very different and more scandalous failing, namely habitual incontinency. Mr. Theobald in his *Shakspeare Restored* proposed to read—*an utter scandal on him*; but did not admit the emendation into his edition. MALONE.

⁸ *That's not my meaning*:] That is not what I mean, when I permit you to accuse him of drabbing. M. MASON.

⁹ *A savageness*—] *Savageness*, for *wildness*. WARBURTON.

¹⁰ *Of general assault*.] i. e. such as youth in general is liable to. WARBURTON.

¹¹ *And, I believe, it is a fetch of warrant*:] So, the folio. The quarto reads,—a fetch of *wit*. STEEVENS.

¹² — prenominate *crimes*,] i. e. crimes already named.

STEEVENS.

*Good fir, or so;*⁵ *or friend, or gentleman,—*
According to the phrase, or the addition,
Of man, and country.

REY. Very good, my lord.

POL. And then, fir, does he this,—He does—
What was I about to say?—By the mass, I was about
to say something:—Where did I leave?

REY. At, closes in the consequence.

POL. At, closes in the consequence,⁶—*Ay, marry;*
He closes with you thus:—*I know the gentleman;*
I saw him yesterday, or t'other day,
Or then, or then; with such, or such; and, as you say,
There was he gaming; there o'ertook in his rouse;
There falling out at tennis: or, perchance,
I saw him enter such a house of sale,
(Videlicet, a brothel,) or so forth.—

See you now;

Your bait of falsehood takes this carp of truth:
And thus do we of wisdom and of reach;
With windlances, and with assays of bias,
By indirections find directions out;
So, by my former lecture and advice,
Shall you my son: You have me, have you not?

REY. My lord, I have.

POL. God be wi'you; fare you well.

REY. Good my lord,—

⁵ *Good fir, or so;]* I suspect, (with Mr. Tyrwhitt,) that the poet wrote—*Good fir, or fir, or friend, &c.* In the last act of this play, *so* is used for *so forth*: “——fix French rapiers and poniards, with their assigns, as girdle, hanger, and *so*.”

MALONE.

⁶ *At, closes in the consequence,]* Thus the quarto. The folio adds—*At friend, or so, or gentleman.* MALONE.

POL. Observe his inclination in yourself.⁷

REY. I shall, my lord.

POL. And let him ply his musick.

REY. Well, my lord.
[Exit.]

Enter OPHELIA.

POL. Farewell!—How now, Ophelia? what's the matter?

OPH. O, my lord, my lord, I have been so affrighted!

POL. With what, in the name of heaven?

OPH. My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,
Lord Hamlet,—with his doublet all unbrac'd;
No hat upon his head; his stockings foul'd,
Ungarter'd, and down-gyved to his ancle;⁸
Pale as his shirt; his knees knocking each other;
And with a look so piteous in purport,
As if he had been loosed out of hell,
To speak of horrors,—he comes before me.

POL. Mad for thy love?

⁷ — in *yourself*.] Sir T. Hanmer reads,—*e'en* yourself, and is followed by Dr. Warburton; but perhaps *in* yourself means, *in your own person*, not by spies. JOHNSON.

The meaning seems to be—The temptations you feel, suspect in him, and be watchful of them. So, in a subsequent scene:

“For by the image of my cause, I see

“The portraiture of his.”

Again, in *Timon*:

“I weigh my friend's affection with my own.” C.

⁸ *Ungarter'd, and down-gyved to his ancle*;] *Down-gyved* means hanging down like the loose cincture which confines the fetters round the ancles. STEEVENS.

Thus the quartos 1604, and 1605, and the folio. In the quarto of 1611, the word *gyved* was changed to *gyred*. MALONE.

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REY. Well, my lord.
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OPH. My lord, I do not know;
But, truly, I do fear it.

POL. What said he?

OPH. He took me by the wrist, and held me hard;
Then goes he to the length of all his arm;
And, with his other hand thus o'er his brow,
He falls to such perusal of my face,
As he would draw it. Long stay'd he so;
At last,—a little shaking of mine arm,
And thrice his head thus waving up and down,—
He rais'd a sigh so piteous and profound,
As it did seem to shatter all his bulk,¹
And end his being: That done, he lets me go:
And, with his head over his shoulder turn'd,
He seem'd to find his way without his eyes;
For out o'doors he went without their helps,
And, to the last, bended their light on me.

POL. Come, go with me; I will go seek the king.
This is the very ecstasy of love;
Whose violent property foredoes itself,²
And leads the will to desperate undertakings,
As oft as any passion under heaven,
That does afflict our natures. I am sorry,—
What, have you given him any hard words of late?

OPH. No, my good lord; but, as you did com-
mand,
I did repel his letters, and deny'd
His access to me.

¹ —all his bulk,] i. e. all his body. So, in *The Rape of Lucretia*:

“ —————her heart

“ Beating her *bulk*, that his hand shakes withal.”

See Vol. X. p. 510, n. 4. MALONE.

² —foredoes itself,] To *foredo* is to destroy. So, in *Othello*:

“ That either makes me, or *foredoes* me quite.”

STEEVENS.

Pol. That hath made him mad.
 I am sorry, that with better heed, and judgement,
 I had not quoted him;³ I fear'd, he did but trifle,
 And meant to wreck thee; but, beshrew my jealousy!
 It seems, it is as proper to our age
 To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions,
 As it is common for the younger sort
 To lack discretion.⁴ Come, go we to the king:

³ *I had not quoted him:*] To *quote* is, I believe, to *reckon*, to take an account of, to take the *quotient* or result of a computation.

JOHNSON.
 I find a passage in *The Isle of Gulls*, a comedy, by John Day, 1606, which proves Dr. Johnson's sense of the word to be not far from the true one:

"——'twill be a scene of mirth

"For me to *quote* his passions, and his smiles."

To *quote* on this occasion undoubtedly means to *observe*. Again, in Drayton's *Mooncalf*:

"This honest man the prophecy that noted,

"And things therein most curiously had *quoted*,

"Found all these signs," &c.

Again, in *The Woman Hater*, by Beaumont and Fletcher, the intelligencer says,—"I'll *quote* him to a tittle," i. e. I will mark or observe him.

To *quote* as Mr. M. Mason observes, is invariably used by Shakspeare in this sense. STEEVENS.

So, in *The Rape of Lucrece*:

"Yea, the illiterate—

"Will *quote* my loathed trespass in my looks."

In this passage, in the original edition of 1594, the word is written *cote*, as it is in the quarto copy of this play. It is merely the old or corrupt spelling of the word. See Vol. V. p. 276, n. 8, and p. 368, n. 8; Vol. VI. p. 367, n. 2; and Vol. VIII. p. 138, n. 5. In Minshew's Dict. 1617, we find, "To *quote*, mark, or note, à *quotus*. Numeris enim scribentes sententias suas *notant* et distinguunt." See also Cotgrave's Dict. 1611: "Quoter. To *quote* or *marke* in the margin; to note by the way."

MALONE.

⁴ —— it is as proper to our age

To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions,

As it is common for the younger sort

To lack discretion.] This is not the remark of a weak man.

The vice of age is too much suspicion. Men long accustomed to

PRINCE OF DENMARK. 97

This must be known; which, being kept close,
 might move
 More grief to hide, than hate to utter love.^s
 Come. [Exeunt.

S C E N E II.

A Room in the Castle.

*Enter King, Queen, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN,
 and Attendants.*

KING. Welcome, dear Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern!

Moreover that we much did long to see you,
 The need, we have to use you, did provoke
 Our hasty sending. Something have you heard
 Of Hamlet's transformation; so I call it,

the wiles of life cast commonly beyond themselves, let their cunning go farther than reason can attend it. This is always the fault of a little mind, made artful by long commerce with the world.

JOHNSON.

The quartos read—*By heaven it is as proper &c.* STEEVENS.

In Decker's *Wonderful Yearre*, 4to. 1603, we find an expression similar to that in the text. "Now the thirstie citizen casts beyond the moone." MALONE.

The same phrase has already occurred in *Titus Andronicus*. REED.

^s *This must be known; which, being kept close, might move*

More grief to hide, than hate to utter love.] i. e. this must be made known to the King, for (being kept secret) the hiding Hamlet's love might occasion more mischief to us from him and the queen, than the uttering or revealing of it will occasion hate and resentment from Hamlet. The poet's ill and obscure expression seems to have been caused by his affectation of concluding the scene with a couplet.

Sir T. Hanmer reads,

More grief to hide hate, than to utter love. JOHNSON.

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H

Since nor the exterior nor the inward man
 Resembles that it was: What it should be,
 More than his father's death, that thus hath put
 him

So much from the understanding of himself,
 I cannot dream of: I entreat you both,
 That,—being of so young days brought up with
 him:

And, since, so neighbour'd to his youth and hu-
 mour,⁶—

That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court
 Some little time: so by your companies
 To draw him on to pleasures; and to gather,
 So much as from occasion you may glean,
 Whether aught,⁷ to us unknown, afflicts him thus,
 That, open'd, lies within our remedy.

QUEEN. Good gentlemen, he hath much talk'd
 of you;

And, sure I am, two men there are not living,
 To whom he more adheres. If it will please you
 To show us so much gentry,⁸ and good will,
 As to expend your time with us a while,
 For the supply and profit of our hope,⁹
 Your visitation shall receive such thanks
 As fits a king's remembrance.

Ros. Both your majesties
 Might, by the sovereign power you have of us,^a

⁶ —and humour,] Thus the folio. The quartos read—
behaviour. STEEVENS.

⁷ *Whether aught, &c.*] This line is omitted in the folio.

STEEVENS.

⁸ *To show us so much gentry,*] *Gentry, for complaisance.*

WARBURTON.

⁹ *For the supply &c.*] That the hope which your arrival has
 raised may be completed by the desired effect. JOHNSON.

^a —*you have of us,*] I believe we should read—*ever* us,
 instead of—*of* us. M. MASON.

Put your dread pleasures more into command
Than to entreaty.

GUIL. But we both obey;
And here give up ourselves, in the full bent,¹
To lay our service freely at your feet,
To be commanded.

KING. Thanks, Rosencrantz, and gentle Guildenstern.

QUEEN. Thanks, Guildenstern, and gentle Rosencrantz:

And I beseech you instantly to visit
My too much changed son.—Go, some of you,
And bring these gentlemen where Hamlet is.

GUIL. Heavens make our presence, and our practices,
Pleasant and helpful to him!

QUEEN. Ay, amen!

[*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and some Attendants.*]

Enter POLONIUS.

POL. The embassadors from Norway, my good lord,
Are joyfully return'd.

KING. Thou still hast been the father of good news.

POL. Have I, my lord? Assure you, my good liege,

¹ —in the full bent,] *Bent*, for *endeavour*, *application*.

WARBURTON.

The full bent, is the utmost extremity of exertion. The allusion is to a bow bent as far as it will go. So afterwards in this play:

“They fool me to top of my bent.” MALONE.

I hold my duty, as I hold my soul,
Both to my God, and to my gracious king:
And I do think, (or else this brain of mine
Hunts not the trail of policy⁴ so sure
As it hath us'd to do,) that I have found
The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.

KING. O, speak of that; that do I long to hear.

POL. Give first admittance to the embassadors;
My news shall be the fruit⁵ to that great feast.

KING. Thyself do grace to them, and bring them
in. [Exit POLONIUS.]
He tells me, my dear Gertrude, he hath found
The head and source of all your son's distemper.

QUEEN. I doubt, it is no other but the main;
His father's death, and our o'erhasty marriage.

Re-enter POLONIUS, with VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS.

KING. Well, we shall sift him.—Welcome, my
good friends!
Say, Voltimand, what from our brother Norway?

VOLT. Most fair return of greetings, and desires,
Upon our first, he sent out to suppress
His nephew's levies; which to him appear'd
To be a preparation 'gainst the Polack;
But, better look'd into, he truly found
It was against your highness: Whereat griev'd,—
That so his sickness, age, and impotence,

⁴ — the trail of policy —] The trail is the course of an animal pursued by the scent. JOHNSON.

⁵ — the fruit —] The desert after the meat. JOHNSON.

Was falsely borne in hand,⁶—sends out arrests
On Fortinbras; which he, in brief, obeys;
Receives rebuke from Norway; and, in fine,
Makes vow before his uncle, never more
To give the assay⁷ of arms against your majesty.
Whereon old Norway, overcome with joy,
Gives him three thousand crowns in annual fee;⁸
And his commission, to employ those soldiers,
So levied as before, against the Polack:
With an entreaty, herein further shown,

[Gives a paper.

That it might please you to give quiet pass
Through your dominions for this enterprize;

⁶ — borne in hand,] i. e. deceived, imposed on. So, in *Macbeth*, Act III:

“How you were borne in hand, how cross’d,” &c.

See note on this passage, Vol. VII. p. 456, n. 3. STEEVENS.

⁷ To give the assay —] To take the assay was a technical expression, originally applied to those who tasted wine for princes and great men. See Vol. XIV. p. 280, n. 4. MALONE.

⁸ Gives him three thousand crowns in annual fee;] This reading first obtained in the edition put out by the players. But all the old quartos (from 1605, downwards,) read *three score*.

THEOBALD.

The metre is destroyed by the alteration; and three score thousand crowns, in the days of Hamlet, was an enormous sum of money.

M. MASON.

— annual fee;] Fee in this place signifies reward, recompence. So, in *All's well that ends well*:

“—Not helping, death's my fee;

“But if I help, what do you promise me?”

The word is commonly used in Scotland, for *wages*, as we say *lawyer's fee*, *physician's fee*. STEEVENS.

Fee is defined by Minshew in his Dict. 1617, a reward.

MALONE.

I have restored the reading of the folio. Mr. Ritson explains it, I think, rightly thus: the king gave his nephew a *fund* or *fee* (in land) of that yearly value. REED.

On such regards of safety, and allowance,
As therein are set down.

KING.

It likes us well;

And, at our more consider'd time, we'll read,
Answer, and think upon this business.

Mean time, we thank you for your well-took labour:

Go to your rest; at night we'll feast⁹ together:
Most welcome home!

[*Exeunt* VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS.

POL.

This business is well ended.

My liege, and madam, to expostulate²

⁹ — at night we'll feast—] The king's intemperance is never suffered to be forgotten. JOHNSON.

² *My liege, and madam, to expostulate—*] To *expostulate*, for to enquire or discuss.

The strokes of humour in this speech are admirable. Polonius's character is that of a weak, pedant, minister of state. His declamation is a fine satire on the impertinent oratory then in vogue, which placed reason in the formality of method, and wit in the gingle and play of words. With what art is he made to pride himself in his wit:

“That he is mad, 'tis true: 'tis true, 'tis pity:

“And pity 'tis, 'tis true: A foolish figure;

“But farewell it,——.”

And how exquisitely does the poet ridicule the *reasoning in fashion*, where he makes Polonius remark on Hamlet's madness:

“Though this be *madness*, yet there's *method* in't:”

As if method, which the wits of that age thought the most essential quality of a good discourse, would make amends for the *madness*. It was *madness* indeed, yet Polonius could comfort himself with this reflection, that at least it was *method*. It is certain Shakspeare excels in nothing more than in the preservation of his characters; *To this life and variety of character* (says our great poet [Pope] in his admirable preface to Shakspeare) *we must add the wonderful preservation*. We have said what is the character of Polonius; and it is allowed on all hands to be drawn with wonderful life and spirit, yet the *unity* of it has been thought by some to be grossly violated in the excellent *precepts* and *instructions* which Shakspeare makes his statesman give his son and servant in the middle of the *first*, and

What majesty should be, what duty is,
Why day is day, night, night, and time is time,

beginning of the *second act*. But I will venture to say, these critics have not entered into the poet's art and address in this particular. He had a mind to ornament his scenes with those fine lessons of social life; but his Polonius was too weak to be author of them, though he was pedant enough to have met with them in his reading, and sop enough to get them by heart, and retail them for his own. And this the poet has finely shewn us was the case, where, in the middle of Polonius's instructions to his servant, he makes him, though without having received any interruption, forget his lesson, and say,

"And then, sir, does he this;

"He does——What was I about to say?

"I was about to say something——where did I leave?"

The servant replies,

At, closes in the consequence. This sets Polonius right, and he goes on,

"*At* closes in the consequence.

"——*Ay* marry,

"*He closes thus*:——I know the gentleman," &c.

which shews the very words got by heart which he was repeating. Otherwise *closes in the consequence*, which conveys no particular idea of the subject he was upon, could never have made him recollect where he broke off. This is an extraordinary instance of the poet's art, and attention to the preservation of character.

WARBURTON.

This account of the character of Polonius, though it sufficiently reconciles the seeming inconsistency of so much wisdom with so much folly, does not perhaps correspond exactly to the ideas of our author. The commentator makes the character of Polonius, a character only of manners, discriminated by properties superficial, accidental, and acquired. The poet intended a nobler delineation of a mixed character of manners and of nature. Polonius is a man bred in courts, exercised in business, stored with observation, confident in his knowledge, proud of his eloquence, and declining into dotage. His mode of oratory is truly represented as designed to ridicule the practice of those times, of prefaces that made no introduction, and of method that embarrassed rather than explained. This part of his character is accidental, the rest is natural. Such a man is positive and confident, because he knows that his mind was once strong, and knows not that it is become weak. Such a man excels in general principles, but fails in the particular application. He is knowing in retrospect, and ignorant in foresight.

Were nothing but to waste night, day, and time.
 Therefore,—since brevity is the soul of wit,
 And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,—
 I will be brief: Your noble son is mad:
 Mad call I it: 'for, to define true madness,
 What is't, but to be nothing else but mad:
 But let that go.

QUEEN. More matter, with less art,

POL. Madam, I swear, I use no art at all.
 That he is mad, 'tis true: 'tis true, 'tis pity;
 And pity 'tis, 'tis true: a foolish figure;
 But farewell it, for I will use no art.
 Mad let us grant him then: and now remains,
 That we find out the cause of this effect;
 Or, rather say, the cause of this defect;
 For this effect, defective, comes by cause:
 Thus it remains, and the remainder thus.
 Perpend.
 I have a daughter; have, while she is mine;
 Who, in her duty and obedience, mark,
 Hath given me this: Now gather, and surmise,

While he depends upon his memory, and can draw from his repositories of knowledge, he utters weighty sentences, and gives useful counsel; but as the mind in its enfeebled state cannot be kept long busy and intent, the old man is subject to sudden dereliction of his faculties, he loses the order of his ideas and entangles himself in his own thoughts, till he recovers the leading principle, and falls again into his former train. This idea of dotage encroaching upon wisdom, will solve all the phenomena of the character of Polonius. *JOHNSON.*

Nothing can be more just, judicious, and masterly, than Johnson's delineation of the character of Polonius; and I cannot read it without heartily regretting that he did not exert his great abilities and discriminating powers, in delineating the strange, inconsistent, and indecisive character of Hamlet, to which I confess myself unequal. *M. MASON.*

—*To the celestial, and my soul's idol, the most beautified Ophelia,*³—

That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase; *beautified* is a vile phrase; but you shall hear.—Thus:

*In her excellent white bosom, these,*⁴ &c.—

QUEEN. Came this from Hamlet to her?

³ —*To the celestial, and my soul's idol, the most beautified Ophelia,*] Mr. Theobald for *beautified* substituted *beatified*. MALONE.

Dr. Warburton has followed Mr. Theobald; but I am in doubt whether *beatified*, though, as Polonius calls it, a *vile phrase*, be not the proper word. *Beautified* seems to be a *vile phrase*, for the ambiguity of its meaning. JOHNSON.

Heywood, in his *History of Edward VI.* says “*Katherine Parre, queen dowager to king Henry VIII, was a woman beautified with many excellent virtues.*” FARMER.

So, in *The Hog bath lost his Pearl*, 1614:

“A maid of rich endowments, *beautified*

“With all the virtues nature could bestow.”

Again, Nash dedicates his *Christ's Tears over Jerusalem*, 1594: “to the most *beautified* lady, the lady Elizabeth Carey.”

Again, in Greene's *Mamillia*, 1593: “—although thy person is so bravely *beautified* with the dowries of nature.”

Ill and *vile* as the phrase may be, our author has used it again in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*:

“—seeing you are *beautified*

“With goodly shape,” &c. STEEVENS.

By *beautified* Hamlet means *beautiful*. But Polonius, taking the word in the more strictly grammatical sense of *being made beautiful*, calls it a *vile phrase*, as implying that his daughter's beauty was the effect of art. M. MASON.

⁴ *In her excellent white bosom, these,*] So, in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*:

“Thy letters —

“Which, being writ to me, shall be deliver'd

“Even in the *milk-white bosom of thy love.*”

See Vol. III. p. 236, n. 2. STEEVENS.

I have followed the quarto. The folio reads:

These in her excellent white bosom, these, &c.

In our poet's time the word *These* was usually added at the end of the superscription of letters, but I have never met with it both at the beginning and end. MALONE.

(As I perceiv'd it, I must tell you that,
Before my daughter told me,) what might you,
Or my dear majesty your queen here, think,
If I had play'd the desk, or table-book;
Or given my heart a working, mute and dumb;
Or look'd upon this love with idle sight;
What might you think?⁸ no, I went round⁹ to
work,
And my young mistress thus did I bespeak;
*Lord Hamlet is a prince out of thy sphere;*²
This must not be: and then I precepts gave her,³

⁸ *If I had play'd the desk, or table-book;
Or given my heart a working, mute and dumb;
Or look'd upon this love with idle sight;*

What might you think?] i. e. If either I had conveyed intelligence between them, and been the confidant of their amours [*play'd the desk or table-book,*] or had connived at it, only observed them in secret, without acquainting my daughter with my discovery [*given my heart a mute and dumb working;*] or lastly, had been negligent in observing the intrigue, and overlooked it [*looked upon this love with idle sight;*] what would you have thought of me? **WARBURTON.**

I doubt whether the first line is rightly explained. It may mean, if I had lock'd up this secret in my own breast, as closely as if it were confined in a desk or table-book. **MALONE.**

Or given my heart a working, mute and dumb;] The folio reads—a *quinking*. **STEEVENS.**

The same pleonasm [*mute and dumb*] is found in our author's *Rape of Lucrece*:

“And in my hearing be you *mute and dumb*.” **MALONE.**

⁹ — round—] i. e. roundly, without reserve. So Polonius says in the third act: “—be *round* with him.”

STEEVENS.

² *Lord Hamlet is a prince out of thy sphere;*] The quarto, 1604, and the first folio, for *sphere*, have *star*. The correction was made by the editor of the second folio. **MALONE.**

³ — precepts gave her,] Thus the folio. The two elder quartos read—*prescripts*. I have chosen the most familiar of the two readings. Polonius has already said to his son:

“And these few *precepts* in thy memory

“Look thou character.” **STEEVENS.**

That she should lock herself from his resort,
 Admit no messengers, receive no tokens.
 Which done, she took the fruits of my advice;⁴
 And he, repulsed, (a short tale to make,)
 Fell into a sadness; then into a fast;⁵
 Thence to a watch; thence into a weakness;
 Thence to a lightness; and, by this declension,
 Into the madness wherein now he raves,
 And all we mourn for.

KING. Do you think, 'tis this?

QUEEN. It may be, very likely.

POL. Hath there been such a time, (I'd fain
 know that,) That I have positively said, 'Tis so,
 When it prov'd otherwise?

KING. Not that I know.

POL. Take this from this, if this be otherwise:
 [Pointing to his head and shoulder.

The original copy in my opinion is right. Polonius had ordered his daughter to lock herself from Hamlet's resort, &c. See p. 59:

"I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth,

"Have you so slander any moment's leisure

"As to give words or talk with the lord Hamlet:

"Look to't, I charge you." MALONE.

⁴ Which done, she took the fruits of my advice;] She took the fruits of advice when she obeyed advice, the advice was then made fruitful. JOHNSON.

⁵ — (a short tale to make,)

Fell into a sadness; then into a fast; &c.] The ridicule of this character is here admirably sustained. He would not only be thought to have discovered this intrigue by his own sagacity, but to have remarked all the stages of Hamlet's disorder, from his sadness to his raving, as regularly as his physician could have done; when all the while the madness was only feigned. The humour of this is exquisite from a man who tells us, with a confidence peculiar to small politicians, that he could find

"Where truth was hid, though it were hid indeed

"Within the centre." WARBURTON.

If circumstances lead me, I will find
Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed
Within the centre.

KING. How may we try it further?

POL. You know, sometimes he walks four hours
together,⁶
Here in the lobby.

QUEEN. So he does, indeed.

POL. At such a time I'll loose my daughter to
him:

Be you and I behind an arras then;
Mark the encounter: if he love her not,
And be not from his reason fallen thereon,
Let me be no assistant for a state,
But keep a farm, and carters.⁷

KING. We will try it.

⁶ — four hours together,] Perhaps it would be better were we
to read indefinitely,

— for hours together. TYRWHITT.

I formerly was inclined to adopt Mr. Tyrwhitt's proposed emen-
dation; but have now no doubt that the text is right. The ex-
pression, *four hours together, two hours together, &c.* appears to
have been common: So, in *King Lear*, Act I:

"Edm. Spake you with him?"

"Edg. Ay, *two hours together.*"

Again, in *The Winter's Tale*:

"— ay, and have been, any time these *four hours.*"

Again, in Webster's *Dutchess of Malfy*, 1623:

"She will muse *four hours together*, and her silence

"Methinks expresseth more than if she spake."

MALONE.

⁷ *At such a time I'll loose my daughter to him:*

Be you and I behind an arras then;

Mark the encounter: if he love her not,

And be not from his reason fallen thereon,

Let me be no assistant for a state,

But keep a farm, and carters.] The scheme of throwing
Ophelia in Hamlet's way, in order to try his sanity, as well as the

Enter HAMLET, reading.

QUEEN. But, look, where sadly the poor wretch comes reading.

addresses of the King in a former scene to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern,

- “ ——— I entreat you both ———
- “ That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court
- “ Some little time; so by your companies
- “ *To draw him on to pleasures*, and to gather
- “ So much as from occasion you may glean,
- “ Whether aught to us unknown afflicts him thus,
- “ That, open'd, lies within our remedy;—”

seem to have been formed on the following slight hints in *The History of Hamlet*, bl. let. fig. C. 3: “ They counselled to try and know if possible, how to discover the intent and meaning of the young prince; and they could find no better nor more fit invention to intrap him, than to set some faire and beautiful woman in a secret place, that with flattering speeches and all the craftiest meanes she could, should purposely seek to allure his mind to have his pleasure of her.—To this end, *certain courtiers* were appointed to lead Hamlet to a solitary place, within the woods, where they brought the woman, inciting him to take their pleasures together. And surely the poore prince at this assault had bene in great danger, if a gentleman that in Horvendille's time had been nourished with him, had not showne himselfe more affectioned to the bringing up he had received with Hamlet, than desirous to please the tyrant.—This gentleman bare the courtiers company, making full account that the least shewe of perfect fence and wisdom that Hamlet should make, would be sufficient to cause him to loose his life; and therefore by certaine signes he gave Hamlet intelligence in what danger he was like to fall, if by any meanes he seemed to obeye, or once like the wanton toyes and vicious provocations of the gentlewoman sent thither by his uncle: which much abashed the prince, as then wholly being in affection to the lady. But by her he was likewise informed of the treason, as one that from her infancy loved and favoured him.—The prince in this sort having deceived the courtiers and the ladys expectation, that affirmed and swore hee never once offered to have his pleasure of the woman, although in subtilty he affirmed the contrary, every man thereupon assured themselves that without doubt he was distraught of his senses;—so that as then Fensons practise took no effect.”

PRINCE OF DENMARK. 111

POL. Away, I do beseech you, both away;
I'll board him^s presently:—O, give me leave.—

[*Exeunt King, Queen, and Attendants.*]

How does my good lord Hamlet?

HAM. Well, god-'a-mercy.

POL. Do you know me, my lord?

HAM. Excellent well; you are a fishmonger.

POL. Not I, my lord.

HAM. Then I would you were so honest a man.

POL. Honest, my lord?

HAM. Ay, sir; to be honest, as this world goes,
is to be one man pick'd out of ten thousand.

POL. That's very true, my lord.

HAM. For if the sun breed maggots in a dead
dog, being a god, kissing carrion,—Have you a
daughter?⁹

Here we find the rude outlines of the characters of Ophelia, and Horatio,—the gentleman that in the time of Horvendille (the father of Hamlet) had been nourished with him. But in this piece there are no traits of the character of Polonius. There is indeed a counsellor, and he places himself in the queen's chamber behind the arras;—but this is the whole. MALONE.

⁹ I'll board him—] i. e. accost, address him. See Vol. IV. p. 17, n. 8. REED.

⁹ For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a god, kissing carrion,—Have you a daughter?] [Old copies—a god kissing carrion,] The editors seeing Hamlet counterfeit madness, thought they might safely put any nonsense into his mouth. But this strange passage, when set right, will be seen to contain as great and sublime a reflection as any the poet puts into his hero's mouth throughout the whole play. We will first give the true reading, which is this: *For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a god, kissing carrion,——*. As to the sense we may observe, that the illative particle [for] shows the speaker to be reasoning from something he had said before: what that was we learn in these words, *to be honest, at*

POL. I have, my lord.

HAM. Let her not walk i'the sun : conception is

this world goes, is to be one picked out of ten thousand. Having said this, the chain of ideas led him to reflect upon the argument which libertines bring against Providence from the circumstance of *abounding evil*. In the next speech therefore he endeavours to answer that objection, and vindicate Providence, even on a supposition of the fact, that almost all men were wicked. His argument in the two lines in question is to this purpose,—*But why need we wonder at this abounding of evil? For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, which though a god, yet shedding its heat and influence upon carrion*—Here he stops short, lest talking too consequentially the hearer should suspect his madness to be feigned; and so turns him off from the subject, by enquiring of his daughter. But the inference which he intended to make, was a very noble one, and to this purpose. If this (says he) be the case, that the effect follows the thing operated upon [*carrion*] and not the thing operating [*a god,*] why need we wonder, that the supreme cause of all things diffusing its blessings on mankind, who is, as it were, a dead carrion, dead in original sin, man, instead of a proper return of duty, should breed only corruption and vices? This is the argument at length; and is as noble a one in behalf of Providence as could come from the schools of divinity. But this wonderful man had an art not only of acquainting the audience with what his actors *say*, but with what they *think*. The sentiment too is altogether in character, for Hamlet is perpetually moralizing, and his circumstances make this reflection very natural. The same *thought*, something diversified, as on a different occasion, he uses again in *Measure for Measure*, which will serve to confirm these observations :

“ The tempter or the tempted, who sins most ?

“ Not she; nor doth she tempt; but it is I

“ That lying by the violet in the sun,

“ Do as the carrion does, not as the flower,

“ Corrupt by virtuous season.”

And the same kind of *expression* is in *Cymbeline* :

“ Common-kissing Titan.” WARBURTON.

This is a noble emendation which almost sets the critick on a level with the author. JOHNSON.

Dr. Warburton, in my apprehension, did not understand the passage. I have therefore omitted his laboured comment on it, in which he endeavours to prove that Shakspeare intended it as a vindication of the ways of Providence in permitting evil to abound in the world. He does not indeed pretend that this profound

a blessing;² but as your daughter may conceive,—friend, look to't.

meaning can be drawn from what Hamlet *says*; but that this is what he was *thinking of*; for “this wonderful man (Shakspeare) had an art not only of acquainting the audience with what his actors *say*, but with what they *think*!”

Hamlet's observation is, I think, simply this. He has just remarked that honesty is very rare in the world. To this Polonius assents. The prince then adds, that since there is so little virtue in the world, since corruption abounds every where, and maggots are *bred* by the sun, even in a dead dog, Polonius ought to take care to prevent his daughter from walking in the sun, lest she should prove “a breeder of sinners;” for though *conception* in general be a blessing, yet as Ophelia (whom Hamlet supposes to be as frail as the rest of the world,) might chance to *conceive*, it might be a calamity. The maggots *breeding* in a dead dog, seem to have been mentioned merely to introduce the word *conception*; on which word, as Mr. Steevens has observed, Shakspeare has play'd in *King Lear*: and probably a similar quibble was intended here. The word, however, may have been used in its ordinary sense, for *pregnancy*, without any double meaning.

The slight connection between this and the preceding passage, and Hamlet's abrupt question,—*Have you a daughter?* were manifestly intended more strongly to impress Polonius with the belief of the prince's madness.

Perhaps this passage ought rather to be regulated thus:—“being a *god-kissing* carrion;” i. e. a carrion that kisses the sun. The participle *being* naturally refers to the last antecedent, *dog*. Had Shakspeare intended that it should be referred to *sun*, he would probably have written—“*be* being a god,” &c. We have many similar compound epithets in these plays. Thus, in *King Lear*, Act II. sc. I. Kent speaks of “*ear-kissing* arguments.” Again, more appositely in the play before us:

“New lighted on a *beaven-kissing* hill.”

Again, in *The Rape of Lucrece*:

“Threatning *cloud-kissing* Ilion with annoy.”

However, the instance quoted from *Cymbeline* by Dr. Warburton, “—*common-kissing* Titan,” seems in favour of the regulation that has been hitherto made; for here we find the poet considered the sun as kissing the carrion, not the carrion as kissing the sun. So, also in *King Henry IV.* Part I: “Did'st thou never see *Titan* kiss a dish of butter?” The following lines also in the historical play of *King Edward III.* 1596, which Shakspeare had certainly

POL. How say you by that? [*Aside.*] Still harping on my daughter:—yet he knew me not at first; he said, I was a fishmonger: He is far gone, far gone: and, truly, in my youth I suffer'd much extremity for love; very near this. I'll speak to him again.—What do you read, my lord?

HAM. Words, words, words!

POL. What is the matter, my lord?

HAM. Between who?

POL. I mean, the matter that you read, my lord.

seen, are, it must be acknowledged, adverse to the regulation I have suggested:

“ The freshest *summer's day* doth soonest taint

“ The loathed *carriage*, that it seems to *kiss*.”

In justice to Dr. Johnson, I should add, that the high eulogium which he has pronounced on Dr. Warburton's emendation, was founded on the *comment* which accompanied it; of which, however, I think, his judgement must have condemned the reasoning, though his goodness and piety approved its moral tendency. MALONE.

As a doubt, at least, may be entertained on this subject, I have not ventured to expunge a note written by a great critic, and applauded by a greater. STEEVENS.

² —conception is a *blessing*; &c.] Thus the quarto. The folio reads thus: “ —conception is a *blessing*; but not as your daughter may conceive. *Friend, look to't.*” The meaning seems to be, *conception* (i. e. understanding) is a *blessing*; but as your daughter may *conceive* (i. e. be pregnant,) *friend look to't*, i. e. have a care of that. The same quibble occurs in the first scene of *King Lear*:

“ *Kent.* I cannot *conceive* you, sir.

“ *Glo.* Sir, this young fellow's mother *could*.”

STEEVENS.

The word *not*, I have no doubt, was inserted by the editor of the folio, in consequence of his not understanding the passage. A little lower we find a similar interpolation in some of the copies, probably from the same cause: “ You cannot, sir, take from me any thing that I will *not* more willingly part withal, except my life.” MALONE.

HAM. Slanders, fir: for the fatirical rogue says here, that old men have grey beards;² that their faces are wrinkled; their eyes purging thick amber, and plum-tree gum; and that they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams: All which, fir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down; for yourself, fir, shall be as old as I am, if, like a crab, you could go backward.

POL. Though this be madness, yet there's me-

² *Slanders, fir: for the fatirical rogue says here, that old men &c.]*
By the *fatirical rogue* he means Juvenal in his 10th Satire:

“ Da spatium vitæ, multos da Jupiter annos:

“ Hoc recto vultu, solum hoc et pallidus optas.

“ Sed quàm continuus et quantis longa senectus

“ Plena malis! *deformem, et tetrum ante omnia vultum,*

“ *Diffimilemque sui,*” &c.

Nothing could be finer imagined for Hamlet, in his circumstances, than the bringing him in reading a description of the evils of long life. **WARBURTON.**

Had Shakspeare read *Juvenal* in the original, he had met with

“ De temone Britanno, Excidet Arviragus”——

and

“ —— Uxorem, *Posthume*, ducis?”

We should not then have had continually in *Cymbeline*, *Arviragus*, and *Posthums*. Should it be said that the *quantity* in the former word might be forgotten, it is clear from the mistake in the latter, that Shakspeare could not possibly have read any one of the Roman poets.

There was a translation of the 10th Satire of *Juvenal* by Sir John Beaumont, the elder brother of the famous Francis: but I cannot tell whether it was printed in Shakspeare's time. In that age of quotation, every classic might be picked up by *piece-meal*.

I forgot to mention in its proper place, that another description of *Old Age* in *As you like it*, has been called a parody on a passage in a French poem of Garnier. It is trifling to say any thing about this, after the observation I made in *Macbeth*: but one may remark once for all, that Shakspeare wrote for the *people*; and could not have been so absurd as to bring forward any allusion, which had not been familiarized by some accident or other. **FARMER.**

thod in it. [*Aside.*] Will you walk out of the air, my lord?

HAM. Into my grave?

POL. Indeed, that is out o'the air.—How pregnant sometimes his replies are! ³ a happiness that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity could not so prosperously be deliver'd of. I will leave him, and suddenly ⁴ contrive the means of meeting between him and my daughter.—My honourable lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you.

HAM. You cannot, fir, take from me any thing that I will more willingly part withal; except my life, except my life, except my life.

POL. Fare you well, my lord.

HAM. These tedious old fools!

Enter ROSENCRANTZ ⁵ and GUILDENSTERN.

POL. You go to seek the lord Hamlet; there he is.

ROS. God save you, fir! [*To POLONIUS.*
[*Exit POLONIUS.*

GUIL. My honour'd lord!—

ROS. My most dear lord!—

HAM. My excellent good friends! How doft thou, Guildenstern? Ah, Rosencrantz! Good lads, how do ye both?

³ *How pregnant &c.*] *Pregnant* is ready, dexterous, apt. So, in *Twelfth Night*:

“ ——— a wickedness

“ Wherein the *pregnant* enemy doth much.” STEEVENS.

⁴ ——— *and suddenly &c.*] This, and the greatest part of the two following lines, are omitted in the quartos. STEEVENS.

⁵ ——— *Rosencrantz* —] There was an ambassador of that name in England about the time when this play was written. STEEVENS.

Ros. As the indifferent children of the earth.

Guil. Happy, in that we are not overhappy;
On fortune's cap we are not the very button.

Ham. Nor the soles of her shoe?

Ros. Neither, my lord.

Ham. Then you live about her waist, or in the
middle of her favours?

Guil. 'Faith, her privates we.

Ham. In the secret parts of fortune? O, most
true; she is a strumpet. What news?

Ros. None, my lord; but that the world's grown
honest.

Ham. Then is doomsday near: But your news is
not true. [Let me⁶ question more in particular:
What have you, my good friends, deserved at the
hands of fortune, that she sends you to prison hi-
ther?

Guil. Prison, my lord!

Ham. Denmark's a prison.

Ros. Then is the world one.

Ham. A goodly one; in which there are many
confines, wards, and dungeons; Denmark being
one of the worst.

Ros. We think not so, my lord.

Ham. Why, then 'tis none to you; for there is
nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it
so: to me it is a prison.

Ros. Why, then your ambition makes it one; 'tis
too narrow for your mind.

Ham. O God! I could be bounded in a nutshell,

⁶ [Let me &c.] All within the crotchets is wanting in the
quartos. STEEVENS.

and count myself a king of infinite space ; were it not that I have bad dreams.

GUIL. Which dreams, indeed, are ambition ; for the very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream.⁷

HAM. A dream itself is but a shadow.

Ros. Truly, and I hold ambition of so airy and light a quality, that it is but a shadow's shadow.

HAM. Then are our beggars, bodies ;⁸ and our monarchs, and outstretch'd heroes, the beggars' shadows : Shall we to the court ? for, by my fay, I cannot reason.

Ros. GUIL. We'll wait upon you.

HAM. No such matter : I will not fort you with the rest of my servants ; for, to speak to you like an honest man, I am most dreadfully attended.] But, in the beaten way of friendship, what make you at Elsinore ?

Ros. To visit you, my lord ; no other occasion.

HAM. Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks ; but I thank you : and sure, dear friends, my thanks are too dear, a halfpenny.⁹ Were you not sent for ?

⁷ — *the shadow of a dream.*] Shakspeare has accidentally inverted an expression of Pindar, that the state of humanity is *σναις ὕμης*, the dream of a shadow. JOHNSON.

So, Davies:

“ Man's life is but a dreame, nay, less than so,

“ *A shadow of a dreame.*” FARMER.

So, in the tragedy of *Darius*, 1603, by Lord Sterline:

“ Whose best was but the *shadow of a dream.*”

STEEVENS.

⁸ *Then are our beggars, bodies ;*] Shakspeare seems here to design a ridicule of those declamations against wealth and greatness, that seem to make happiness consist in poverty. JOHNSON.

⁹ — *too dear, a halfpenny.*] i. e. a half-penny too dear : they are worth nothing. The modern editors read—*at a half-penny.*

MALONE.

Is it your own inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come, come; deal justly with me: come, come; nay, speak.

GUIL. What should we say, my lord?

HAM. Any thing—but to the purpose. You were sent for; and there is a kind of confession in your looks, which your modesties have not craft enough to colour: I know, the good king and queen have sent for you.

Ros. To what end, my lord?

HAM. That you must teach me. But let me conjure you, by the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of our youth, by the obligation of our ever-preserved love, and by what more dear a better proposer could charge you withal, be even and direct with me, whether you were sent for, or no?

Ros. What say you? [*To GUILDENSTERN.*

HAM. Nay, then I have an eye of you;² [*Aside.*]—if you love me, hold not off.

GUIL. My lord, we were sent for.

HAM. I will tell you why; so shall my anticipation prevent your discovery, and your secrecy to the king and queen moult no feather. I have of late,³ (but, wherefore, I know not,) lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises: and, indeed, it goes so heavily with my disposition, that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory;

² *Nay, then I have an eye of you;*] An eye of you means, I have a glimpse of your meaning. STEEVENS.

³ *I have of late, &c.*] This is an admirable description of a rooted melancholy sprung from thickens of blood; and artfully imagined to hide the true cause of his disorder from the penetration of these two friends, who were set over him as spies.

WARBURTON.

this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament,⁴ this majestical roof fretted with golden fire,⁵ why, it appears no other thing to me, than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason! how infinite in faculties! in form, and moving, how express and admirable! in action, how like an angel! in apprehension, how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? man delights not me,—nor woman neither; though, by your smiling, you seem to say so.

Ros. My lord, there was no such stuff in my thoughts.

HAM. Why did you laugh then, when I said, *Man delights not me?*

Ros. To think, my lord, if you delight not in man, what lenten entertainment⁶ the players shall receive from you: we coted them on the way;⁷ and hither are they coming, to offer you service.

⁴ — *this brave o'erhanging firmament,*] Thus the quarto. The folio reads,—*this brave o'er-banging*, this, &c. STEEVENS.

⁵ — *this most excellent canopy, the air,—this majestical roof fretted with golden fire,*] So, in our author's 21st Sonnet:

“As those gold candles, fix'd in heaven's air.”

Again, in *The Merchant of Venice*:

“—Look, how the floor of heaven

Is thick inlaid with patins of bright gold!” MALONE.

⁶ — *lenten entertainment*—] i. e. sparing, like the entertainments given in Lent. So, in *The Duke's Mistress*, by Shirley, 1631:

“—to maintain you with bisket,

“Poor John, and half a livery, to read moral virtue

“And *lenten* lectures.” STEEVENS.

⁷ — *we coted them on the way*;] To cote is to overtake. I meet with this word in *The Return from Parnassus*, a comedy, 1606:

“—marry we presently coted and outfripped them.”

HAM. He that plays the king, shall be welcome ; his majesty shall have tribute of me : the adventurous knight shall use his foil, and target : the lover shall not sigh gratis ; the humorous man shall end his part in peace :⁸ the clown shall make those laugh, whose lungs are tickled o'the fere ;⁹ and the

Again, in Golding's Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, 1587, Book II :

" With that Hippomenes coted her."

Again, in Warner's *Albion's England*, 1602, Book VI. chap. xxx :

" Gods and goddeses for wantonness out-coted."

Again, in Drant's translation of Horace's satires, 1567 :

" For he that thinks to coat all men, and all to overgoe."

Chapman has more than once used the word in his version of the 23d *Iliad*.

See Vol. V. p. 276, n. 8.

In the laws of courting, says Mr. Tollet, " a cote is when a greyhound goes endways by the side of his fellow, and gives the hare a turn." This quotation seems to point out the etymology of the verb to be from the French *côté*, the side. STEEVENS.

⁸ — *shall end his part in peace :*] After these words the folio adds—*the clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickled o'the fere.* WARBURTON.

⁹ — *the clown shall make those laugh, whose lungs are tickled o'the fere ;*] i. e. those who are asthmatical, and to whom laughter is most uneasy. This is the case (as I am told) with those whose lungs are tickled by the *fere* or *serum* : but about these words I am neither very confident, nor very solicitous. Will the following passage in *The Tempest* be of use to any future commentator?

" — to minister occasion to these gentlemen, who are of such sensible and nimble *lungs*, that they always use to laugh at nothing."

The word *seare* occurs as unintelligibly in an ancient *Dialogue between the Comen Secretary and Felowsy, touchynge the unstaiblenes of Harlottes*, bl. l. no date :

" And wyll byde whysperynge in the eare,

" Thynke ye her tayle is not light of the seare?"

The *fere* is likewise a part about a hawk. STEEVENS.

These words are not in the quarto. I am by no means satisfied with the explanation given, though I have nothing satisfactory to propose. I believe Hamlet only means, that the clown shall make those laugh who have a disposition to laugh ; who are pleased with their entertainment. That no asthmatick disease was in contemplation, may be inferred from both the words used, *tickled* and

lady shall say her mind freely,³ or the blank verse shall halt for't.—What players are they?

ROS. Even those you were wont to take such delight in, the tragedians of the city.

HAM. How chances it, they travel?³ their residence, both in reputation and profit, was better both ways.

ROS. I think, their inhibition comes by the means of the late innovation.⁴

lungs; each of which seems to have a relation to laughter, and the latter to have been considered by Shakspeare, as (if I may so express myself,) its natural seat. So, in *Coriolanus*:

“ ——— with a kind of *smile*,

“ Which ne'er came from the *lungs*,—.”

Again, in *As you like it*:

“ ——— When I did hear

“ The motley fool thus moral on the time,

“ My *lungs* began to crow like chanticler.”

O'the fere, or *of the fere*, means, I think, *by the fere*; but the word *fere* I am unable to explain, and suspect it to be corrupt. Perhaps we should read—*the clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickled o'the scene*, i. e. *by the scene*. A similar corruption has happened in another place, where we find *scare* for *scene*. See Vol. III. p. 472, n. 4. MALONE.

² ——— *the lady shall say her mind &c.*] The lady shall have no obstruction, unless from the lameness of the verse. JOHNSON.

I think, the meaning is,—The lady shall mar the measure of the verse, rather than not express herself freely or fully.

HENDERSON.

³ *How chances it, they travel?*] *To travel*, in Shakspeare's time was the technical word, for which we have substituted *to stroll*. So, in the Office-book of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels to King Charles the First, a manuscript of which an account is given in Vol. II.: “ 1622. Feb. 17, for a certificate for the Palfgrave's servants to *travel* into the country for six weeks, 10s.” Again, in Ben Jonson's *Poetaster*, 1601: “ If he pen for thee once, thou shalt not need to *travell*, with thy pumps full of gravell, any more, after a blinde jade and a hamper, and stalk upon boords and barrel-heads to an old crackt trumpet.” These words are addressed to a player. MALONE.

⁴ *I think, their inhibition &c.*] I fancy this is transposed: Hamlet

HAM. Do they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the city? Are they so follow'd?

enquires not about an *inhibition*, but an *innovation*; the answer therefore probably was,—*I think, their innovation, that is, their new practice of strolling, comes by means of the late inhibition.*

JOHNSON.

The drift of Hamlet's question appears to be this,—How chances it they travel?—i. e. *How happens it that they are become strollers?*—Their residence, both in reputation and profit, was better both ways.—i. e. *to have remained in a settled theatre, was the more honourable as well as the more lucrative situation.* To this, Rosencrantz replies,—*Their inhibition comes by means of the late innovation.*—i. e. *their permission to act any longer at an established house is taken away, in consequence of the NEW CUSTOM of introducing personal abuse into their comedies.* Several companies of actors in the time of our author were silenced on account of this licentious practice. Among these (as appears from a passage in *Have with you to Saffron Walden, or Gabriel Harvey's Hunt is up, &c.* 1596,) even the children of St. Paul's: "Troth, would he might for mee (that's all the harme I wifh him) for then we neede never wishe the playes at Powles up againe," &c. See a dialogue between *Comedy and Envy* at the conclusion of *Mucedorus*, 1598, as well as the prelude to *Aristippus, or the Jovial Philosopher*, 1630, from whence the following passage is taken: "*Shew* having been long intermitted and forbidden by authority, for their abuses, could not be raised but by conjuring." *Shew* enters, whipped by two furies, and the prologue says to her:

- " — with tears wash off that guilty sin,
- " Purge out those ill-digested dregs of wit,
- " That use their ink to blot a spotless name:
- " Let's have no one *particular man* traduc'd,—
- " — spare the *persons*," &c.

Alteration therefore in the order of the words seems to be quite unnecessary. STEEVENS.

There will still, however, remain some difficulty. The statute 39 Eliz. ch. 4. which seems to be alluded to by the words—*their inhibition*, was not made to inhibit the players from acting any longer at an *established theatre*, but to prohibit them from *strolling*. "All fencers, (says the act,) bearwards, *common players of enterludes*, and minstrels, *wandering abroad*, (other than players of enterludes, belonging to any baron of this realm or any other honourable personage of greater degree, to be authorized to play under the hand and seal of arms of such baron or personage,) shall be taken, adjudged, and deemed, rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars,

Ros. No, indeed, they are not.

[HAM. How comes it? Do they grow rusty?

Ros. Nay, their endeavour keeps in the wonted pace: But there is, fir, an aiery of children,⁶ little

and shall sustain such pain and punishments as by this act is in that behalf appointed."

This statute, if alluded to, is repugnant to Dr. Johnson's transposition of the text, and to Mr. Steevens's explanation of it as it now stands. Yet Mr. Steevens's explanation may be right: Shakspeare might not have thought of the act of Elizabeth. He could not, however, mean to charge his friends the *old tragedians* with the *new custom* of introducing personal abuse; but must rather have meant, that the old tragedians were inhibited from performing in the city, and obliged to travel, on account of the misconduct of the younger company. See n. 6. MALONE.

By the late *innovation*, it is probable that Rosencrantz means the late change of government. The word *innovation* is used in the same sense in *The Triumph of Love*, in Fletcher's *Four moral representations in one*, where Cornelia says to Rinaldo:

" ——— and in poor habits clad,

" (You fled, and the *innovation* laid aside)."

And in Fletcher's [Shirley's] play of *The Coronation*, after Leonatus is proclaimed king, Lyfander says to Philocles:

" What dost thou think of this *innovation*?" M. MASON.

⁵ [Ham. *How comes it?* &c.] The lines enclosed in crotchets are in the folio of 1623, but not in any of the quartos. JOHNSON.

⁶ — an aiery of children, &c.] Relating to the play houses then contending, the *Bankside*, the *Fortune*, &c. played by the children of his majesty's chapel. POPE.

It relates to the young singing men of the chapel royal, or St. Paul's, of the former of whom perhaps the earliest mention occurs in an anonymous puritanical pamphlet, 1569, entitled *The Children of the Chapel stript and whipt*: "Plaies will neuer be suppress, while her maiesties unfledged minions flaunt it in filkes and fattenes. They had as well be at their popish seruice in the deuils garments," &c.—Again, *ibid*: "Euen in her maiesties chapel do these pretty upstart youthes profane the Lordes day by the lasciuious writhing of their tender limbes, and gorgeous decking of their apparell, in feigning bawdie fables gathered from the idolatrous heathen poets," &c.

Concerning the performances and success of the latter in attracting the best company, I also find the following passage in *Jack Drum's Entertainment, or Pasquil and Katherine*, 1601:

cyases, that cry out on the top of question,⁷ and are most tyrannically clapp'd for't: these are now the

" I saw the *children of Powles* last night;
 " And troth they pleas'd me pretty, pretty well,
 " The apes, in time, will do it handsomely.
 " — I like the audience that frequenteth there
 " With *much applause*: a man shall not be choak'd
 " With the stench of garlick, nor be puffed
 " To the barmy jacket of a beer-brewer.
 " — 'Tis a good *gentle audience*," &c.

It is said in Richard Flecknoe's *Short Discourse of the English Stage*, 1664, that, " both the children of the chappel and St. Paul's, acted plays, the one in White-Friers, the other behinde the Convocation-house in Paul's; till people growing more precise, and plays more licentious, the theatre of Paul's was quite suppressed, and that of the children of the chappel converted to the use of the children of the revels." STEEVENS.

The suppression to which Flecknoe alludes took place in the year 1583-4; but afterwards both the children of the chapel and of the Revels played at our author's playhouse in Blackfriars, and elsewhere: and the choir-boys of St. Paul's at their own house. See the *Account of our old Theatres* in Vol. II. A certain number of the children of the Revels, I believe, belonged to each of the principal theatres.

Our author cannot be supposed to direct any satire at those young men who played occasionally at his own theatre. Ben Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels*, and his *Poetaster*, were performed there by the children of Queen Elizabeth's chapel, in 1600 and 1601; and *Eastward Hoe* by the children of the revels, in 1604 or 1605. I have no doubt therefore that the dialogue before us was pointed at the choir-boys of St. Paul's, who in 1601 acted two of Marston's plays, *Antonio and Mellida*, and *Antonio's Revenge*. Many of Lyly's plays were represented by them about the same time; and in 1607 Chapman's *Buffy's Ambois* was performed by them with great applause. It was probably in this and some other noisy tragedies of the same kind, that they cry'd out on the top of question, and were most tyrannically clapp'd for't.

At a later period indeed, after our poet's death, the *Children of the Revels* had an established theatre of their own, and some dispute seems to have arisen between them and the king's company. They performed regularly in 1623, and for eight years afterwards, at the Red Bull in St. John's Street; and in 1627, Shakspeare's company obtained an inhibition from the Master of the Revels to prevent their performing any of his plays at their house: as appears

fashion; and so berattle the common stages, (so they call them) that many, wearing rapiers, are

from the following entry in Sir Henry Herbert's Office-book, already mentioned: "From Mr. Heminge, in their company's name, to forbid the playinge of any of Shakspeare's playes to the Red-Bull company, this 11th of Aprill, 1627,—5 0 0." From other passages in the same book, it appears that the Children of the Revels composed the Red-Bull company.

We learn from Heywood's *Apology for Actors*, that the little *eyes* here mentioned were the persons who were guilty of the late *innovation*, or practice of introducing personal abuse on the stage, and perhaps for their particular fault the players in general suffered; and the older and more decent comedians, as well as the children, had on some recent occasion been *inhibited* from acting in London, and compelled to turn strollers. This supposition will make the words concerning which a difficulty has been stated, (see n. 5.) perfectly clear. Heywood's *Apology for Actors* was published in 1612; the passage therefore which is found in the folio, and not in the quarto, was probably added not very long before that time.

"Now to speake (says Heywood,) of some abuse *lately* crept into the quality, as an *inveighing against the state, the court, the law, the city, and their governments, with the particularizing of private mens humours, yet alive, noblemen and others*, I know it distastes many; neither do I any way approve it, nor dare I by any means excuse it. The liberty which some arrogate to themselves, committing their bitterness and liberal invectives against all estates *to the mouthe of children*, supposing their juniority to be a priviledge for any rayling, be it never so violent, I could advise all such to curbe, and limit this presumed liberty within the bands of discretion and government. But wise and judicial censurers before whom such complaints shall at any time hereafter come, will not, I hope, impute these abuses to any transgression in us, who have ever been carefull and provident to shun the like."

Prynne in his *Histriomastix*, speaking of the state of the stage, about the year 1620, has this passage: "Not to particularise those late new scandalous invective playes, wherein sundry persons of place and eminence [Gundemore, the late lord admiral, lord treasurer, and others,] have been particularly personated, jeared, abused in a grofs and scurrilous manner," &c.

The folio, 1623, has—*berattled*. The correction was made by the editor of the second folio.

Since this note was written, I have met with a passage in a letter from Mr. Samuel Calvert to Mr. Winwood, dated March 28, 1605,

afraid of goose quills, and dare scarce come thither.

HAM. What, are they children? Who maintains them? how are they escoted?⁸ Will they pursue

which might lead us to suppose that the words found only in the folio were added at that time:

"The plays do not forbear to present upon the stage the whole course of this present time, not sparing the king, state, or religion, in so great absurdity, and with such liberty, that any would be afraid to hear them." *Memorials*, Vol. II. p. 54. MALONE.

⁷ — *little cyales, that cry out on the top of question,*] Little *cyases*; i. e. young nestlings, creatures just out of the egg.

THEOBALD.

The Booke of Hawking, &c. bl. l. no date, seems to offer another etymology. "And so bycause the best knowledge is by the *eye*, they be called *eyessed*. Ye may also know an *eyesse* by the paleness of the feres of her legges, or the fere over the beake."

STEEVENS.

From *cy*, Teut. ovum, q. d. qui recens ex ovo emerfit. Skinner, *Etymol.* An *aiery* or *eyrie*, as it ought rather to be written, is derived from the same root, and signifies both a young brood of hawks, and the nest itself in which they are produced.

An *eyas* hawk is sometimes written a *nyas* hawk, perhaps from a corruption that has happened in many words in our language, from the latter *n* passing from the end of one word to the beginning of another. However, some etymologists think *nyas* a legitimate word. MALONE.

— *cry out on the top of question,*] The meaning seems to be, they ask a common question in the highest note of the voice.

JOHNSON.

I believe *question*, in this place, as in many others, signifies *conversation, dialogue*. So, in *The Merchant of Venice*: "Think, you *question* with a Jew." The meaning of the passage may therefore be—*Children that perpetually recite in the highest notes of voice that can be uttered*. STEEVENS.

When we ask a *question*, we generally end the sentence with a high note. I believe, therefore, that what Rosencrantz means to say is, that these children declaim, through the whole of their parts, in the high note commonly used at the end of a *question*, and are applauded for it. M. MASON.

⁸ — *escoted?*] Paid. From the French *escot*, a shot or reckoning. JOHNSON.

the quality no longer than they can sing?' will they not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common players, (as it is most like,² if their means are no better,) their writers do them wrong,³ to make them exclaim against their own succession?

Ros. 'Faith, there has been much to do on both sides; and the nation holds it no sin, to tarre them on to controversy:⁴ there was, for a while, no money bid for argument, unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question.

HAM. Is it possible?

⁹ *Will they pursue the quality no longer than they can sing?* Will they follow the *profession* of players no longer than they keep the voices of boys, and sing in the choir? So afterwards he says to the player, *Come, give us a taste of your quality; come, a passionate speech.* JOHNSON.

So, in the players' *Dedication*, prefixed to the first edition of Fletcher's plays in folio, 1647: "—directed by the example of some who once steered in our *quality*, and so fortunately aspired to chuse your honour, joined with your now glorified brother, patrons to the flowing compositions of the then expired sweet swan of Avon, Shakspeare." Again, in Goffson's *School of Abuse*, 1579: "I speak not of this, as though every one [of the players] that professeth the *qualitie*, so abused himself,—."

"Than they can *sing*," does not merely mean, "than they keep the voices of boys," but is to be understood literally. He is speaking of the choir-boys of St. Paul's. MALONE.

² — *most like*,] The old copy reads—*like most*. STEEVENS.

The correction was made by Mr. Pope. MALONE.

³ — *their writers do them wrong, &c.*] I should have been very much surpris'd if I had *not* found Ben Jonson among the writers here alluded to. STEEVENS.

⁴ — *to tarre them on to controversy*:] To provoke any animal to rage, is *to tarre him*. The word is said to come from the Greek *ταράσσειν*. JOHNSON.

So, already in *King John*:

"—Like a dog, that is compell'd to fight,

"Snatch at his master that doth *tarre* him on."

STEEVENS.

PRINCE OF DENMARK. 129

GUIL. O, there has been much throwing about of brains.

HAM. Do the boys carry it away?

Ros. Ay, that they do, my lord; Hercules and his load too.⁵]

HAM. It is not very strange: for my uncle⁶ is king of Denmark; and those, that would make mouths at him while my father lived, give twenty, forty, fifty, an hundred ducats a-piece, for his picture in little.⁷ 'Sblood, there is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out.

[*Flourish of trumpets within.*

GUIL. There are the players.

⁵ ——— *Hercules and his load too.*] i. e. they not only carry away the world, but the world-bearer too: alluding to the story of Hercules's relieving Atlas. This is humorous.

WARBURTON.

The allusion may be to the *Globe* playhouse on the Bankside, the sign of which was *Hercules carrying the Globe*. STEEVENS.

I suppose Shakspeare meant, that the boys drew greater audiences than the elder players of the *Globe* theatre. MALONE.

⁶ *It is not very strange: for my uncle—*] I do not wonder that the new players have so suddenly risen to reputation, my uncle supplies another example of the facility with which honour is conferred upon new claimants. JOHNSON.

It is not very strange: &c. was originally Hamlet's observation, on being informed that the old tragedians of the city were not so followed as they used to be: [see p. 124, n. 5.] but Dr. Johnson's explanation is certainly just, and this passage connects sufficiently well with that which now immediately precedes it. MALONE.

⁷ ——— *in little.*] i. e. in miniature. So, in *The Noble Soldier*, 1634:

“ The perfection of all Spaniards, Mars *in little*.”

Again, in Drayton's *Shepherd's Sirena*:

“ *Paradise in little* done.”

Again, in Massinger's *New Way to pay old Debts*:

“ His father's picture *in little*.” STEEVENS.

HAM. Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elfinore. Your hands. Come then: the appurtenance of welcome is fashion and ceremony: let me comply with you in this garb;⁸ lest my extent to the players, which, I tell you, must show fairly outward, should more appear like entertainment than yours. You are welcome: but my uncle-father, and aunt-mother, are deceived.

GUIL. In what, my dear lord?

HAM. I am but mad north-north-west: when the wind is southerly,⁹ I know a hawk from a hand-faw.²

⁸ — *let me comply &c.*] Sir T. Hanmer reads,—*let me compliment with you.* JOHNSON.

To *comply* is again apparently used in the sense of—to *compliment*, in Act V: "He did *comply* with his dug, before he fuck'd it."

STEEVENS.

⁹ — *when the wind is southerly, &c.*] So, in *Damon and Pythias*, 1582:

"But I perceive now, either the *winde is at the south*,

"Or else your tunge cleaveth to the rooffe of your mouth."

STEEVENS.

² — *I know a hawk from a handfaw.*] This was a common proverbial speech. The Oxford editor alters it to,—*I know a hawk from an hernshaw*, as if the other had been a corruption of the players; whereas the poet found the proverb thus corrupted in the mouths of the people: so that the critic's alteration only serves to shew us the original of the expression. WARBURTON.

Similarity of sound is the source of many literary corruptions. In Holborn we have still the sign of the *Bull and Gate*, which exhibits but an odd combination of images. It was originally (as I learn from the title-page of an old play) the *Boulogne Gate*, i. e. one of the gates of *Boulogne*; designed perhaps as a compliment to Henry VIII. who took the place in 1544.

The *Boulogne mouth*, now the *Bull and Mouth*, had probably the same origin, i. e. the *mouth of the harbour of Boulogne*.

STEEVENS.

The *Boulogne Gate* was not one of the gates of *Boulogne*, but of *Calais*; and is frequently mentioned as such by Hall and Holinshed. RITSON.

PRINCE OF DENMARK. 131

Enter POLONIUS.

POL. Well be with you, gentlemen!

HAM. Hark you, Guildenstern;—and you too;—
at each ear a hearer: that great baby, you see there,
is not yet out of his swadling-clouts.

ROS. Hapily, he's the second time come to
them; for, they say, an old man is twice a child.

HAM. I will prophecy, he comes to tell me of the
players; mark it.—You say right, sir: o'monday
morning; 'twas then, indeed.

POL. My lord, I have news to tell you.

HAM. My lord, I have news to tell you. When
Roscius was an actor in Rome,—

POL. The actors are come hither, my lord.

HAM. Buz, buz!¹

¹ *Buz, buz!*] Mere idle talk, the *buz* of the vulgar.

JOHNSON.

Buz, buz! are, I believe, only interjections employed to in-
terrupt Polonius. Ben Jonson uses them often for the same pur-
pose, as well as Middleton in *A Mad World, my Masters*, 1608.

STEEVENS.

Buz used to be an interjection at Oxford, when any one began
a story that was generally known before. BLACKSTONE.

Buzzer, in a subsequent scene in this play, is used for a *busy*
talker:

“ And wants not *buzzers*, to infect his ear

“ With pestilent speeches.”

Again, in *King Lear*:

“ —on every dream,

“ Each *buz*, each fancy.”

Again, in Trussel's *History of England*, 1635: “ — who,
instead of giving redress, suspecting now the truth of the duke of
Gloucester's *buzz*,” &c.

It is, therefore, probable from the answer of Polonius, that *buz*
was used, as Dr. Johnson supposes, for an idle rumour without any
foundation.

POL. Upon my honour,—

HAM. *Then came each actor on his afs,*⁴—

POL. The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, [tragical-historical,⁵ tragical-comical, historical-pastoral,] scene individable, or poem unlimited: Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light.⁶ For the law of writ, and the liberty, these are the only men.⁷

In Ben Jonson's *Staple of News*, the collector of mercantile intelligence is called *Emissary Buz*. MALONE.

Whatever may be the origin of this phrase, or rather of this interjection, it is not unusual, even at this day, to cry *buz* to any person who begins to relate what the company had heard before.

M. MASON.

⁴ *Then came &c.*] This seems to be a line of a ballad.

JOHNSON.

⁵ — *tragical-historical, &c.*] The words within the crotchets I have recovered from the folio, and see no reason why they were hitherto omitted. There are many plays of the age, if not of Shakspeare, that answer to these descriptions. STEEVENS.

⁶ — *Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light.*] The tragedies of Seneca were translated into English by Thomas Newton, and others, and published first separate, at different times, and afterwards all together in 1581. One comedy of Plautus, viz. the *Menæchmi*, was likewise translated and published in 1595.

STEEVENS.

I believe the frequency of plays performed at publick schools, suggested to Shakspeare the names of *Seneca* and *Plautus* as dramatick authors. T. WARTON.

⁷ *For the law of writ, and the liberty, these are the only men.*] All the modern editions have,—*the law of wit, and the liberty*; but both my old copies have—*the law of writ*, I believe rightly. *Writ*, for *writing, composition*. *Wit* was not, in our author's time, taken either for *imagination*, or *acuteness*, or *both together*, but for *understanding*, for the faculty by which we *apprehend* and *judge*. Those who wrote of the human mind, distinguished its primary powers into *wit* and *will*. Ascham distinguishes *boys* of *tardy* and of *active* faculties into *quick wits* and *slow wits*. JOHNSON.

PRINCE OF DENMARK. 133

HAM. O *Jephtha*, judge of *Israel*,—what a treasure hadst thou!

POL. What a treasure had he, my lord?

HAM. Why—*One fair daughter, and no more,
The which he loved passing well.*

POL. Still on my daughter. [Aside.

HAM. Am I not i'the right, old *Jephtha*?

POL. If you call me *Jephtha*, my lord, I have a daughter, that I love passing well.

HAM. Nay, that follows not.

POL. What follows then, my lord?

HAM. Why, *As by lot, God wot*,^s and then, you

That *writ* is here used for *writing*, may be proved by the following passage in *Titus Andronicus*:

“Then all too late I bring this fatal *writ*.” STEEVENS.

The old copies are certainly right. *Writ* is used for *writing* by authors contemporary with Shakespeare. Thus, in *The Apologie of Pierce Pennileffe*, by Thomas Nashe, 1593: “For the lowlie circumstance of his poverty before his death, and sending that miserable *writte* to his wife, it cannot be but thou liest, learned Gabriel.” Again in Bishop Earle’s *Character of a mere dull Physician*, 1638: “Then follows a *writ* to his druggier, in a strange tongue, which he understands, though he cannot conster.”

Again, in *King Henry VI.* Part II:

“Now, good my lord, let’s see the devil’s *writ*.”

MALONE.

^s Why, *As by lot, God wot*,—&c.] The old song from which these quotations are taken, I communicated to Dr. Percy, who has honoured it with a place in the second and third editions of his *Reliques of ancient English Poetry*. In the books belonging to the Stationers’ Company, there are two entries of this Ballad among others. “A ballet intituled the Songe of *Jephthah’s daughter*” &c. 1567, Vol. I. fol. 162. Again, “*Jeffa Judge of Israel*,” p. 93, Vol. III. Dec. 14, 1624.

This story was also one of the favourite subjects of ancient tapestry. STEEVENS.

There is a Latin tragedy on the subject of *Jephtha*, by John

know, *It came to pass, As most like it was*,—The first row of the pious chanson⁹ will show you more; for look, my abridgment² comes.

Christopherson in 1546, and another by Buchanan, in 1554. A third by Du Pleffis Mornay is mentioned by Prynne in his *Histrio-mastix*. The same subject had probably been introduced on the English stage. MALONE.

⁹ — *the pious chanson* —] It is *pons chansons* in the first folio edition. The old ballads sung on bridges, and from thence called *Pons chansons*. Hamlet is here repeating ends of old songs.

POPE.

It is *pons chansons* in the quarto too. I know not whence the *rubrick* has been brought, yet it has not the appearance of an arbitrary addition. The titles of old ballads were never printed red; but perhaps *rubrick* may stand for *marginal explanation*.

JOHNSON.

There are five large volumes of ballads in Mr. Pepys's collection in Magdalen College library, Cambridge, some as ancient as Henry VII's reign, and not one red letter upon any one of the titles. GREY.

The words, *of the rubrick* were first inserted by Mr. Rowe, in his edition in 1709. The old quartos in 1604, 1605, and 1611, read *pious chanson*, which gives the sense wanted, and I have accordingly inserted it in the text.

The *pious chansons* were a kind of *Christmas carols*, containing some scriptural history thrown into loose rhymes, and sung about the streets by the common people when they went at that season to solicit alms. Hamlet is here repeating some scraps from a song of this kind, and when Polonius enquires what follows them, he refers him to the *first row* (i. e. division) of one of these, to obtain the information he wanted. STEEVENS.

² — *my abridgment* —] He calls the players afterwards, *the brief chronicles of the times*; but I think he now means only *those who will shorten my talk*. JOHNSON.

An *abridgment* is used for a dramattick piece in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act V. sc. i:

“ Say what *abridgment* have you for this evening?”

but it does not commodiously apply to this passage. See Vol. V. p. 142, n. 4. STEEVENS.

PRINCE OF DENMARK. 135

Enter four or five Players.

You are welcome, masters; welcome, all:—I am glad to see thee well:—welcome, good friends.—O, old friend! Why, thy face is valanced³ since I saw thee last; Com'st thou to beard me⁴ in Denmark?—What! my young lady and mistress! By—r-lady, your ladyship is nearer to heaven, than when I saw you last, by the altitude of a chopine.⁵ Pray

³ ——— *thy face is valanced* —] i. e. fringed with a beard. The valance is the fringes or drapery hanging round the tester of a bed. MALONE.

Dryden in one of his prologues or epilogues has the following line:

“ Criticks in plume, and white *valancy* wig.” STEEVENS.

The folios read *valiant*, which seems right. The comedian was probably “ bearded like the pard.” RITSON.

⁴ ——— *to beard me* —] *To beard*, anciently signified to *set at defiance*. So, in *King Henry IV.* P. I:

“ No man so potent breathes upon the ground,

“ But I will *beard* him.” STEEVENS.

⁵ ——— *by the altitude of a chopine.*] A *chioppine* is a high shoe, or rather, a clog, worn by the Italians, as in Tho. Heywood's *Challenge of Beauty*, Act V. Song:

“ The Italian in her high *chopeene*,

“ Scotch lads, and lovely froe too;

“ The Spanish Donna, French Madame,

“ He doth not feare to go to.”

So, in Ben Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels*:

“ I do wish myself one of my mistress's *cioppini*.” Another demands, why would he be one of his mistress's *cioppini*? a third answers, “ because he would make her *higher*.”

Again, in Decker's *Match me in London*, 1631: “ I'm only taking instructions to make her a lower *chopeene*; she finds fault that she's lifted too high.”

Again, in Chapman's *Cæsar and Pompey*, 1613:

“ ————— and thou shalt

“ Have *chopines* at commandment to an height

“ Of life thou canst wish.”

God, your voice, like a piece of uncurrent gold,
be not crack'd within the ring.⁵—Masters, you are

See the figure of a Venetian courtezan among the *Habiti Antichi &c. di Cesare Vecellio*, p. 114, edit. 1598; and (as Mr. Ritson observes) among the *Diversarum Nationum Habitus*, Padua, 1592.

STEEVENS.

Tom Coryat in his *Crudities*, 1611, p. 262, calls them *chapineys*, and gives the following account of them: "There is one thing used of the Venetian women, and some others dwelling in the cities and townes subject to the signiory of Venice, that is not to be observed (I thinke) amongst any other women in Christendome: which is so common in Venice, that no woman whatsoever goeth without it, either in her house or abroad, a thing made of wood and covered with leather of sundry colors, some with white, some redde, some yellow. It is called a chapiney, which they wear under their shoes. Many of them are curiously painted; some also of them I have seen fairely gilt: so uncomely a thing (in my opinion) that it is pittie this foolish custom is not cleane banished and exterminated out of the citie. There are many of these chapineys of a great height even half a yard high, which maketh many of their women that are very short, seeme much taller than the tallest women we have in England. Also I have heard it observed among them, that by how much the nobler a woman is, by so much the higher are her chapineys. All their gentlewomen and most of their wives and widows that are of any wealth, are assisted and supported eyther by men or women, when they walke abroad, to the end they may not fall. They are borne up most commonly by the left arme, otherwise they might quickly take a fall." REED.

Again, in Marston's *Dutch Courtezan*, 1605: "Dost not wear high corked shoes, chopines?"

The word ought rather to be written *chapine*, from *chapin*, Span. which is defined by Minshew in his Spanish Dictionary, "a high cork shoe." There is no synonymous word in the Italian language, though the Venetian ladies, as we are told by Lessels, "wear high heel'd shoes, like stilts," &c. MALONE.

⁵ — be not crack'd within the ring.] That is, crack'd too much for use. This is said to a young player who acted the parts of women. JOHNSON.

I find the same phrase in *The Captain*, by Beaumont and Fletcher:

"Come to be married to my lady's woman,

"After she's crack'd in the ring."

Again, in Ben Jonson's *Magnetic Lady*:

"Light gold, and crack'd within the ring."

all welcome. We'll e'en to't like French falconers,⁶ fly at any thing we see: We'll have a speech straight; Come, give us a taste of your quality; come, a passionate speech.

I *PLA.* What speech, my lord?

HAM. I heard thee⁶ speak me a speech once,—but it was never acted; or, if it was, not above once: for the play, I remember, pleased not the million; 'twas caviare to the general:⁷ but it was

Again, in *Ram-Alley, or Merry Tricks*, 1611:

“ —not a penny the worse

“ For a little use, *subole within the ring*,”

Again, in Decker's *Honest Whore*, 1635: “ You will not let my oaths be crack'd in the ring, will you?” STEEVENS.

The following passage in Lyly's *Woman in the Moon*, 1597, as well as that in Fletcher's *Captain*, might lead us to suppose that this phrase sometimes conveyed a wanton allusion: “ Well, if she were twenty grains lighter, refuse her, provided always she be not *clipt within the ring*.” T. C.

⁶ —like French falconers,] The amusement of falconry was much cultivated in France. In *All's well that ends well*, Shakspeare has introduced an *astringer* or falconer at the French court. Mr. Tollet, who has mentioned the same circumstance, likewise adds that it is said in *Sir Thomas Browne's Tracts*, p. 116, that “ the French seem to have been the first and noblest falconers in the western part of Europe;” and, that the French king sent over his falconers to show that sport to king James the First.” See Weldon's *Court of King James*. STEEVENS.

—like French falconers,] Thus the folio. Quarto:—like friendly falconers. MALONE.

⁷ —caviare to the general:] Giles Fletcher in his *Russe Commercium*, 1591, p. 11, says in Russia they have divers kinds of fish “ very good and delicate: as the Bellouga & Bellougina of four or five elnes long, the Osttrina & Sturgeon, but not so thick nor long. These four kind of fish breed in the Wolgha and are caught in great plenty, and served thence into the whole realme for a good food. Of the roes of these four kinds they make very great store of Icary or *Caveary*.” See also Mr. Ritson's *Remarks &c.* on Shakspeare, (edit. 1778,) p. 199. REED.

Ben Jonson has ridiculed the introduction of these foreign deli-

(as I received it, and others, whose judgements, in such matters, cried in the top of mine,⁸) an excellent play; well digested in the scenes, set down with as much modesty⁹ as cunning. I remember, one said, there were no falllets^a in the lines, to

■

cacies in his *Cymbria's Revels*: "He doth learn to eat Anchovies, Macaroni, Bovoli, Fagioli, and *Caviare*," &c.

Again, in *The Muses' Looking Glass*, by Randolph, 1638:

"—— the pleasure that I take in spending it,

"To feed on *caviare*, and eat anchovies."

Again, in *The White Devil, or Vittoria Corombona*, 1612:

"—— one citizen

"Is lord of two fair manors that call'd you master,

"Only for *caviare*."

Again, in Marston's *What you will*, 1607:

"—— a man can scarce eat good meat,

"Anchovies, *caviare*, but he's satired." STEEVENS.

Florio in his Italian Dictionary, 1598, defines, *Caviare*, "a kinde of salt meat, used in Italie, like black sope; it is made of the roes of fishes."

Lord Clarendon uses *the general* for *the people*, in the same manner as it is used here. "And so by undervaluing many particulars, (which they truly esteemed,) as rather to be consented to than that *the general* should suffer,—." Book V. p. 530.

MALONE.

⁸ —— *cried in the top of mine,*] i. e. whose judgement I had the highest opinion of. WARBURTON.

I think it means only that *were higher than mine*. JOHNSON.

Whose judgement, in such matters, was in much higher vogue than mine. HEATH.

Perhaps it means only—whose judgement was more clamorously delivered than mine. We still say of a bawling actor, that he speaks *on the top of his voice*. STEEVENS.

To *over-top* is a hunting term applied to a dog when he gives more tongue than the rest of the cry. To this, I believe, Hamlet refers, and he afterwards mentions a *CRY of players*. HENLEY.

⁹ —— *set down with as much modesty—*] *Modesty* for *simplicity*.

WARBURTON.

^a —— *there were no falllets &c.*] Such is the reading of the old copies. I know not why the later editors continued to adopt the alteration of Mr. Pope, and read,—*no salt*, &c.

make the matter favoury; nor no matter in the phrase, that might indite the author of affection:³ but call'd it, an honest method,⁴ as wholesome⁵ as sweet, and by very much more handsome than fine. One speech in it I chiefly loved: 'twas Æneas' tale to Dido; and thereabout of it especially, where he speaks of Priam's slaughter: If it live in your memory, begin at this line; let me see, let me see;—
*The rugged Pyrrhus, like the Hyrcanian beast,*⁶—
 'tis not so; it begins with Pyrrhus.

Mr. Pope's alteration may indeed be in some degree supported by the following passage in Decker's *Satiromastix*, 1602: "—a prepar'd troop of gallants, who shall distaste every *unsalted* line in their fly-blown comedies." Though the other phrase was used as late as in the year 1665, in *A Banquet of Jest*, &c. "— for junkets, joci; and for curious *fallets*, sales." STEEVENS.

³ — indite the author of affection:] Indite, for convict.

WARBURTON.

— indite the author of affection:] i. e. convict the author of being a fantastical *affected* writer. Maria calls Malvolio an *affected* ass, i. e. an *affected* ass; and in *Love's Labour's Lost*, Nathaniel tells the Pedant, that his reasons "have been witty, without affection."

Again, in the translation of *Castiglione's Courtier*, by Hobby, 1556: "Among the chiefe conditions and qualities in a waiting-gentlewoman," is, "to flee *affection* or curiosity."

Again, in Chapman's Preface to *Ovid's Banquet of Sense*, 1595: "Obscuritie in *affection* of words and indigested conceits, is pedanticall and childish." STEEVENS.

⁴ — but call'd it, an honest method,] Hamlet is telling how much his judgement differed from that of others. *One said, there was no fallets in the lines, &c. but called it an honest method.* The author probably gave it,—But I called it an honest method, &c.

JOHNSON.

— an honest method,] *Honest*, for chaste. WARBURTON.

⁵ — as wholesome &c.] This passage was recovered from the quartos by Dr. Johnson. STEEVENS.

"Fabula nullius veneris, morataque recte." M. MASON.

⁶ *The rugged Pyrrhus, &c.*] Mr. Malone once observed to me, that Mr. Capell supposed the speech uttered by the *Player* before *Hamlet*, to have been taken from an ancient drama, entitled "*Dido*

*The rugged Pyrrbus,—he, whose sable arms,
Black as his purpose, did the night resemble*

Queen of Carthage.” I had not then the means of justifying or confuting his remark, the piece alluded to having escaped the hands of the most liberal and industrious collectors of such curiosities. Since, however, I have met with this performance, and am therefore at liberty to pronounce that it did not furnish our author with more than a general hint for his description of the death of Priam, &c.; unless with reference to

“ — the whiff and *wind* of his fell sword

“ The unnerved father falls,—”

we read, ver. *:

“ And with the *wind* thereof the king fell down;”

and can make out a resemblance between

“ So as a painted tyrant, Pyrrhus stood;”

and ver. **:

“ So leaning on his sword, he stood stone still.”

The greater part of the following lines are surely more ridiculous in themselves, than even Shakspeare’s happiest vein of burlesque or parody could have made them:

“ At last came *Pirrbus* fell and full of ire,

“ His harnesse dropping blood, and on his speare

“ The mangled head of *Priams* yongest sonne;

“ And after him his band of Mirmidons,

“ With halles of wild-fire in their murdering pawes,

“ Which made the funerall flame that burnt faire *Troy*:

“ All which hemd me about, crying, this is he.

“ *Dido.* Ah, how could poor *Æneas* scape their hands?

“ *Æn.* My mother *Venus*, jealous of my health,

“ Convoid me from their crooked nets and bands:

“ So I escapt the furious *Pirrbus* wrath,

“ Who then ran to the pallace of the King,

“ And at *Jove’s* Altar finding *Priamus*,

“ About whose witherd neck hung Hecuba,

“ Foulding his hand in hers, and joyntly both

“ Beating their breasts and falling on the ground,

“ He with his faulchions point raifde up at once;

“ And with *Megeras* eyes stared in their face,

“ Threatning a thousand deaths at every glaunce.

“ To whom the aged king thus trembling spoke: &c.—

“ Not mov’d at all, but smiling at his teares,

“ This butcher, whil’st his hands were yet held up,

“ Treading upon his breast, stroke off his hands.

“ *Dido.* O end, *Æneas*, I can hear no more.

PRINCE OF DENMARK. 141

*When he lay couched in the ominous borse,
Hath now this dread and black complexion smear'd
With heraldry more dismal; head to foot
Now is be total gules;¹ horridly trick'd²*

- “Æn. At which the franticke queene leapt on his face,
“ And in his eyelids hanging by the nayles,
“ A little while prolong'd her husband's life:
“ At last the souldiers puld her by the heeles,
“ And swong her howling in the emptie ayre,
“ Which sent an echo to the wounded king:
“ Whereat he lifted up his bedred lims,
“ And would have grappeld with Achilles sonne,
“ Forgetting both his want of strength and hands;
“ Which he disdaining, whist his sword about,
* “ And with the wound thereof the king fell downe:
“ Then from the navell to the throat at once,
“ He ript old Priam; at whose latter gaspe
“ Jove's marble statue gan to bend the brow,
“ As lothing Pirrhuss for this wicked act:
“ Yet he undaunted tooke his fathers flagge,
“ And dipt it in the old kings chill cold bloud,
“ And then in triumph ran into the streetes,
“ Through which he could not passe for slaughtred men:
** “ So leaning on his sword he stood stone still,
“ Viewing the fire wherewith rich Ilion burnt.” ACT II.

The exact title of the play from which these lines are copied, is as follows: The—Tragedie of Dido | *Queen of Carthage* | Played by the Children of her | *Majesties Chappel.* | Written by Christopher Marlowe, and | *Thomas Nasb, Gent.* | —Actors | *Jupiter.* | *Ganimed.* | *Venus.* | *Cupid.* | *Juno.* | *Mercurie, or—Hermes.* | *Æneas.* | *Ascanius.* | *Dido.* | *Anna.* | *Achates.* | *Ilioneus.* | *Iarbas.* | *Cloanthus.* | *Sergeffus.* | At London, | Printed, by the Widdowe Orwin, for Thomas Woodcocke, and | are to be solde at his shop, in Pauls Church-yard, at | the signe of the black Beare. 1594. | STEEVENS.

¹ *Now is be total gules;*] *Gules* is a term in the barbarous jargon peculiar to heraldry, and signifies *red*. Shakspeare has it again in *Times of Athens*:

“ With man's blood paint the ground; *gules, gules.*”

Heywood in his Second Part of the *Iron Age*, has made a verb from it:

“ — old Hecuba's reverend locks

“ Be *gul'd* in slaughter —.” STEEVENS.

² — *trick'd*—] i. e. smeared, painted. An heraldick term. See Vol. VI. p. 193, n. 2. MALONE.

*With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons;
 Bak'd and impast'd with the parching streets,
 That lend a tyrannous and a damned light
 To their lord's murder: Roasted in wrath, and fire,
 And thus o'er-sized with coagulate gore,
 With eyes like carbuncles,⁹ the bellish Pyrrhus
 Old grandfire Priam seeks,—So proceed you.²*

POL. 'Fore God, my lord, well spoken; with good accent, and good discretion.

I. PLAY. *Anon he finds him
 Striking too short at Greeks; his antique sword,
 Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls,
 Repugnant to command: Unequal match'd,
 Pyrrhus at Priam drives; in rage, strikes wide;
 But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword
 The unnerved father falls. Then senseless Ilium,
 Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top
 Stoops to his base; and with a bideous crash
 Takes prisoner Pyrrhus' ear: for, lo! his sword
 Which was declining on the milky head
 Of reverend Priam, seem'd i'the air to stick:
 So, as a painted tyrant,³ Pyrrhus stood;
 And, like a neutral to his will and matter,
 Did nothing.
 But, as we often see, against some storm,
 A silence in the heavens, the rack stand still,
 The bold winds speechless, and the orb below*

⁹ *With eyes like carbuncles,*] So, in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, B. IX. l. 500:

“——— and carbuncles his eyes.” STEEVENS.

² *So proceed you.*] These words are not in the folio.

MALONE.

³ —— *as a painted tyrant,*] Shakspeare was probably here thinking of the tremendous personages often represented in old tapestry, whose uplifted swords *stick in the air*, and *do nothing*.

MALONE.

*As hush as death:*⁴ anon, the dreadful thunder
Doth rend the region: So, after Pyrrbus' pause,
A roused vengeance sets him new a work;
And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall
On Mars's armour,⁵ forg'd for proof eterne,
With less remorse than Pyrrbus' bleeding sword
Now falls on Priam.—

Out, out, thou strumpet, Fortune! All you gods,
In general synod, take away her power;
Break all the spokes and fellies from her wheel,
And bowl the round nave down the bill of heaven,
As low as to the fiends!

POL. This is too long.

HAM. It shall to the barber's, with your beard.—
Pr'ythee, say on:—He's for a jig, or a tale of baw-
dry,⁶ or he sleeps:—say on: come to Hecuba.

⁴ — as we often see, against some storm,—

*The bold winds speechless, and the orb below
As hush as death:]* So, in *Venus and Adonis*:

“Even as the wind is hush'd before it raineth.”

This line leads me to suspect that Shakspeare wrote—the bold
wind speechless. Many similar mistakes have happened in these
plays, where the word ends with the same letter with which the
next begins. MALONE.

⁵ *And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall*

On Mars's armour, &c.] This thought appears to have been
adopted from the 3d Book of Sidney's *Arcadia*: “Vulcan, when
he wrought at his wife's request Æneas an armour, made not his
hammer beget a greater sound than the swords of those noble
knights did” &c. STEEVENS.

⁶ — *He's for a jig, or a tale of bawdry,]* See note on
“—your only jig-maker,” Act III. sc. ii. STEEVENS.

A jig, in our poet's time, signified a ludicrous metrical compo-
sition, as well as a dance. Here it is used in the former sense. So,
in Florio's Italian Dict. 1598: “Frottola, a countrie jig, or
round, or countrie song, or wanton verses. See *The Historical
Account of the English Stage*, &c. Vol. II. MALONE.

I. PLAY. *But who, ah woe!*¹ *had seen the mobled queen*²——

HAM. The mobled queen?

POL. That's good? mobled queen is good.

I. PLAY. *Run barefoot up and down, threat'ning the flames*

¹ *But who, ah woe!*] Thus the quarto, except that it has—*woe*. *A* is printed instead of *ab* in various places in the old copies. *Woe* was formerly used adjectively for *woeful*. So, in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

“Woe, woe are we, fir, you may not live to wear

“All your true followers out.”

The folio reads—*But who, O who, &c.* MALONE.

² ——*the mobled queen*——] *Mobled* or *mabled* signifies *veiled*. So, Sandys speaking of the Turkish women, says, *their beads and faces are mabled in fine linen, that no more is to be seen of them than their eyes.* Travels. WARBURTON.

Mobled signifies *huddled, grossly covered.* JOHNSON.

I meet with this word in Shirley's *Gentleman of Venice*:

“The moon does *mobble* up herself.” FARMER.

Mobled, is, I believe, no more than a depravation of *muffled*. It is thus corrupted in *Ogilby's Fables*, Second Part:

“*Mobbled* nine days in my considering cap,

“Before my eyes beheld the blessed day.”

In the West this word is still used in the same sense; and that is the meaning of *mobble* in Dr. Farmer's quotation.

HOLT WHITE.

The *mabled* queen, (or *mobled* queen, as it is spelt in the quarto,) means, the queen attired in a large, coarse, and careless head-dress. A few lines lower we are told she had “a clout upon that head, where late the diadem stood.”

To *mab*, (which in the North is pronounced *mob*, and hence the spelling of the old copy in the present instance,) says Ray in his Dict. of North Country words, is “to dress carelessly. *Mabs* are *flatterns*.”

The ordinary morning head-dress of ladies continued to be distinguished by the name of a *mab*, to almost the end of the reign of George the Second. The folio reads—the *inbled* queen.

MALONE.

In the counties of Essex and Middlesex, this morning cap has always been called—a *mob*, and not a *mab*. My spelling of the word therefore agrees with its most familiar pronunciation. STEEVENS.

*With biffon rheum ;⁹ a clout upon that bead,
Where late the diadem stood ; and, for a robe,
About her lank and all o'er-teemed loins,
A blanket, in the alarm of fear caught up ;
Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steep'd,
'Gainst fortune's state would treason have pronounc'd :
But if the gods themselves did see her then,
When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport
In mincing with his sword her husband's limbs ;
The instant burst of clamour that she made,
(Unless things mortal move them not at all,)
Would have made milch² the burning eyes of hea-
ven,
And passion in the gods.*

POL. Look, whether he has not turn'd his colour, and has tears in's eyes.—Pr'ythee, no more.

HAM. 'Tis well ; I'll have thee speak out the rest of this soon.—Good my lord, will you see the players well bestow'd ? Do you hear, let them be well used ; for they are the abstract, and brief chronicles, of the time : After your death you were better have a bad epitaph, than their ill report while you live.

POL. My lord, I will use them according to their desert.

HAM. Odd's bodikin, man, much better : Use every man after his desert, and who shall 'scape whipping ? Use them after your own honour and

⁹ *With biffon rheum ;*] *Biffon* or *beefen*, i. e. blind. A word still in use in some parts of the North of England.

So, in *Coriolanus* : " What harm can your *biffon* conspectuities glean out of this character ?" STEEVENS.

² — *made milch* —] Drayton in the 13th Song of his *Polybion* gives this epithet to dew : " Exhaling the *milch* dew," &c. STEEVENS.

dignity: The less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty. Take them in.

POL. Come, sirs.

HAM. Follow him, friends: we'll hear a play to-morrow.—Dost thou hear me, old friend; can you play the murder of Gonzago?

1. PLAY. Ay, my lord.

HAM. We'll have it to-morrow night. You could, for a need, study a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines, which I would set down, and insert in't? could you not?

1. PLAY. Ay, my lord.

HAM. Very well.—Follow that lord; and look you mock him not. [*Exeunt POLONIUS and Players.*] My good friends, [*To Ros. and GUIL.*] I'll leave you till night: you are welcome to Elsinore.

Ros. Good my lord!

[*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*]

HAM. Ay, so, God be wi' you:—Now I am alone. O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I! Is it not monstrous, that this player here,²

² *Is it not monstrous, that this player here,*] It should seem from the complicated nature of such parts as Hamlet, Lear, &c. that the time of Shakspeare had produced some excellent performers. He would scarce have taken the pains to form characters which he had no prospect of seeing represented with force and propriety on the stage.

His plays indeed, by their own power, must have given a different turn to acting, and almost new-created the performers of his age. Mysteries, Moralities, and Enterludes, afforded no materials for art to work on, no discriminations of character, or varieties of appropriated language. From tragedies like *Cambyfes*, *Tamburlaine*, and *Jeronymo*, nature was wholly banished; and the comedies of *Gammer Gurton*, *Common Condycons*, and *The Old Wives Tale*, might have had justice done to them by the lowest order of human beings.

But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
 Could force his soul so to his own conceit,
 That, from her working, all his visage wann'd;³
 Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,⁴

Sensibus his animal, mentisque capaxius altæ
 was wanting, when the dramas of Shakspeare made their first appearance; and to these we were certainly indebted for the excellence of actors who could never have improved so long as their sensibilities were unawakened, their memories burthened only by pedantick or puritanical declamation, and their manners vulgarized by pleasantry of as low an origin. STEEVENS.

³ — *all his visage wann'd*;] [The folio—*warm'd*.] This might do, did not the old quarto lead us to a more exact and pertinent reading, which is—*visage wan'd*; i. e. turned *pale* or *wan*. For so the visage appears when the mind is thus affectioned, and not *warm'd* or *flush'd*. WARBURTON.

⁴ *That, from her working, all his visage wann'd*;
 Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,] *Wan'd* (*wann'd* it should have been spelt,) is the reading of the quarto, which Dr. Warburton, I think rightly, restored. The folio reads *warm'd*, for which Mr. Steevens contends in the following note:

“The working of the soul, and the effort to shed tears, will give a colour to the actor's face, instead of taking it away. The visage is always *warm'd* and *flush'd* by any unusual exertion in a passionate speech; but no performer was ever yet found, I believe, whose feelings were of such exquisite sensibility as to produce *paleness* in any situation in which the drama could place him. But if players were indeed possessed of that power, there is no such circumstance in the speech uttered before Hamlet, as could introduce the *wanness* for which Dr. Warburton contends.”

Whether an actor *can produce paleness*, it is, I think, unnecessary to enquire. That Shakspeare *thought* he could, and considered the speech in question as likely to produce *wanness*, is proved decisively by the words which he has put into the mouth of Polonius in this scene; which add such support to the original reading, that I have without hesitation restored it. Immediately after the Player has finished his speech, Polonius exclaims,

“Look, whether he has not *turn'd his colour*, and has *tears in his eyes*.” Here we find the effort to shed tears, *taking away*, not *giving* a colour. If it be objected, that by *turn'd his colour*, Shakspeare meant that the player *grew red*, a passage in *King*

A broken voice, and his whole function fuiting
With forms to his conceit? And all for nothing!
For Hecuba!

What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,⁵
That he should weep for her? What would he do,
Had he the motive and the cue for passion,⁶
That I have? He would drown the stage with tears,

Richard III. in which the poet is again describing an actor, who is master of his art, will at once answer the objection:

"*Rich.* Come, cousin, can'st thou *quake*, and *change thy colour*?"

"Murder thy breath in middle of a word;

"And then again begin, and stop again,

"As if thou wert *disbraught and mad with terror*?"

"*Buck.* Tut, I can counterfeit the *deep tragedian*;

"*Tremble* and start at wagging of a straw," &c.

The words, *quake*, and *terror*, and *tremble*, as well as the whole context, shew, that by "*change thy colour*," Shakspeare meant *grow pale*. MALONE.

The word *aspect* (as Dr. Farmer very properly observes) was in Shakspeare's time accented on the second syllable. The folio exhibits the passage as I have printed it. STEEVENS.

⁵ *What's Hecuba to him, &c.*] It is plain Shakspeare alludes to a story told of Alexander the cruel tyrant of Phœræ in Thessaly, who seeing a famous tragedian act in the *Troades* of Euripides, was so sensibly touched that he left the theatre before the play was ended; being ashamed, as he owned, that he who never pitied those he murdered, should weep at the sufferings of *Hecuba* and *Andromache*. See Plutarch in the Life of Pelopidas. Upton.

Shakspeare, it is highly probable, had read the life of Pelopidas, but I see no ground for supposing there is here an allusion to it. Hamlet is not ashamed of being seen to weep at a theatrical exhibition, but mortified that a player, in a *dream of passion*, should appear more agitated by fictitious sorrow, than the prince was by a real calamity. MALONE.

⁶ — *the cue for passion,*] The *hint*, the *direction*. JOHNSON.

This phrase is theatrical, and occurs at least a dozen times in our author's plays. Thus, says Quince to Flute in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, "You speak all your part at once, *cues* and all." See also Vol. IX. p. 384, n. 6. STEEVENS.

And cleave the general ear⁷ with horrid speech;
Make mad the guilty, and appal the free,
Confound the ignorant; and amaze, indeed,
The very faculties of eyes and ears.

Yet I,
A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak,
Like John a-dreams,⁸ unpregnant of my cause,⁹
And can say nothing; no, not for a king,
Upon whose property, and most dear life,
A damn'd defeat was made.² Am I a coward?

⁷ ——— *the general ear* —] The ear of all mankind. So before, —
Caviare to the general, that is, to the *multitude*. JOHNSON.

⁸ Like John a-dreams,] *John a-dreams*, i. e. of *dreams*, means only *John the dreamer*; a nick-name, I suppose, for any ignorant silly fellow. Thus the puppet formerly thrown at during the season of Lent, was called *Jack-a-lent*, and the ignis fatuus *Jack-a-lantern*. *John-a-droynes* however, if not a corruption of this nick-name, seems to have been some well-known character, as I have met with more than one allusion to him. So, in *Have with you to Saffron Walden, or Gabriel Harvey's Hunt is up*, by Nashe, 1596: "The description of that poor *John-a-droynes* his man, whom he had hired," &c. *John-a-Droynes* is likewise a foolish character in Whetstone's *Promos and Cassandra*, 1578, who is seized by informers, has not much to say in his defence, and is cheated out of his money. STEEVENS.

⁹ ——— *unpregnant of my cause*,] *Unpregnant*, for *having no due sense of*. WARBURTON.

Rather, *not quickened with a new desire of vengeance; not teeming with revenge*. JOHNSON.

² *A damn'd defeat was made.*] *Defeat*, for *destruction*.

WARBURTON.

Rather, *dispossession*. JOHNSON.

The word *defeat*, (which certainly means *destruction* in the present instance) is very licentiously used by the old writers. Shakespeare in *Othello* employs it yet more quaintly. — "Defeat thy favour with an usurped beard;" and Middleton, in his comedy called *Any Thing for a Quiet Life*, says — "I have heard of your defeat made upon a mercer."

Again, in *Revenge for Honour*, by Chapman:

"That he might meantime *make a sure defeat*

"On our good aged father's life."

Who calls me villain? breaks my pate across?
Plucks off my beard, and blows it in my face?
Tweaks me by the nose? gives me the lie i' the
throat,

As deep as to the lungs? Who does me this?

Ha!

Why, I should take it: for it cannot be,
But I am pigeon-liver'd, and lack gall
To make oppression bitter; or, ere this,
I should have fatted all the region kites
With this slave's offal: Bloody, bawdy villain!
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless' vil-
lain!

Why, what an ass am I? This is most brave;⁴
That I, the son of a dear father murder'd,
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words,
And fall a cursing, like a very drab,

Again, in *The Wits*, by Sir W. D'Avenant, 1637: "Not all the skill I have, can pronounce him free of the defeat upon my gold and jewels."

Again, in *The Isle of Gulls*, 1606: "My late shipwreck has made a defeat both of my friends and treasure." STEEVENS.

In the passage quoted from *Othello*, to *defeat* is used for *undo* or alter: *defaire*, Fr. See Minshew in v. Minshew considers the substantives *defeat* and *defeature* as synonymous. The former he defines an overthrow; the latter, *execution or slaughter of men*. In *King Henry V.* we have a similar phraseology:

"Making defeat upon the powers of France."

And the word is again used in the same sense in the last act of this play:

"—— Their defeat

"Doth by their own insinuation grow." MALONE.

³ —— *kindless* —] *Unnatural*. JOHNSON.

⁴ *Why, what an ass am I? This is most brave;*] The folio reads,—

"O vengeance!

"Who? what an ass am I? Sure this is most brave."

STEEVENS.

A scullion!⁵

Fie upon't! foh! About my brains!⁶ Humph! I have heard,

That guilty creatures, sitting at a play,⁷
Have by the very cunning of the scene
Been struck so to the soul, that presently
They have proclaim'd their malefactions:
For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak
With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players
Play something like the murder of my father,
Before mine uncle: I'll observe his looks;
I'll tent him⁸ to the quick; if he do blench,⁹
I know my course. The spirit, that I have seen,
May be a devil: and the devil hath power
To assume a pleasing shape; yea, and, perhaps,

⁵ *A scullion!*] Thus the folio. The quartos read,—*A stallion*.
STEEVENS.

⁶ — *About my brains!*] *Wits, to your work. Brain, go about the present business.* JOHNSON.

This expression (which seems a parody on the naval one,—*about ship!*) occurs in the Second Part of the *Iron Age*, by Heywood, 1632:

“*My brain about again!* for thou hast found

“*New projects now to work on.*”

About, my brain! therefore, (as Mr. M. Mason observes) appears to signify, “be my thoughts shifted into a contrary direction.”

STEEVENS.

⁷ — *I have heard,*

That guilty creatures, sitting at a play,] A number of these stories are collected together by Thomas Heywood, in his *Actor's Fandication*. STEEVENS.

⁸ — *tent him* —] Search his wounds. JOHNSON.

⁹ — *if he do blench,*] If he shrink, or start. The word is used by Fletcher, in *The Night-walker*:

“*Blench* at no danger, though it be a gallows.”

Again, in Gower, *De Confessione Amantis*, Lib. VI. fol. 128:

“Without *bleuchinge* of mine eie.” STEEVENS.

See Vol. VII. p. 38, n. 7. MALONE.

Out of my weakness, and my melancholy,
 (As he is very potent with such spirits,)
 Abuses me to damn me : I'll have grounds
 More relative than this :¹ The play's the thing,
 Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.
[Exit.

A C T III. S C E N E I.

A Room in the Castle.

Enter King, Queen, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.

KING. And can you by no drift of conference²
 Get from him, why he puts on this confusion ;
 Grating so harshly all his days of quiet
 With turbulent and dangerous lunacy ?

ROS. He does confess, he feels himself distracted ;
 But from what cause he will by no means speak.

GUIL. Nor do we find him forward to be founded ;
 But, with a crafty madness, keeps aloof,
 When we would bring him on to some confession
 Of his true state.

QUEEN. Did he receive you well ?

ROS. Most like a gentleman.

² *More relative than this :*] *Relative, for convictive.*

WARBURTON.

Convictive is only the consequential sense. *Relative* is nearly
related, closely connected. JOHNSON.

³ — conference —] The folio reads—*circumstance.*

STEEVENSON

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GUIL. But with much forcing of his disposition.

Ros. Niggard of question; but, of our demands,
Most free in his reply.⁴

QUEEN. Did you assay him
To any pastime?

Ros. Madam, it so fell out, that certain players
We o'er-raught on the way:⁵ of these we told him;
And there did seem in him a kind of joy
To hear of it: They are about the court;
And, as I think, they have already order

⁴ Niggard of question; but, of our demands,
Most free in his reply.] This is given as the description of
the conversation of a man whom the speaker found not forward to
be founded; and who kept aloof when they would bring him to con-
fession: but such a description can never pass but at cross-purposes.
Shakspeare certainly wrote it just the other way:

Most free of question; but, of our demands,
Niggard in his reply.

That this is the true reading, we need but turn back to the
preceding scene, for Hamlet's conduct, to be satisfied.

WARBURTON.
Warburton forgets that by *question*, Shakspeare does not usually
mean *interrogatory*, but *discourse*; yet in which ever sense the word
be taken, this account given by Rosencrantz agrees but ill with
the scene between him and Hamlet, as actually represented.

M. MASON.
Slow to begin conversation, but free enough in his answers to
our demands. Guildenstern has just said that Hamlet kept aloof
when they wished to bring him to confess the cause of his dis-
traction: Rosencrantz therefore here must mean, that *up to that*
point, till they touch'd on that, he was free enough in his answers.

MALONE.

⁵ — o'er-raught on the way:] *Over-raught* is *over-reached*,
that is, *over-took*. **JOHNSON.**

So, in Spenser's *Faery Queen*, Book VI. c. iii:

"Having by chance a close advantage view'd,

"He *over-raught* him," &c.

Again, in the 5th Book of Gawin Douglas's translation of *The*
Iliad:

"War not the samyn mysfortoun me *over-raucht*."

STREVENSON.

This night to play before him.

POL. 'Tis most true:
And he beseech'd me to entreat your majesties,
To hear and see the matter.

KING. With all my heart; and it doth much
content me
To hear him so inclin'd.
Good gentlemen, give him a further edge,
And drive his purpose on to these delights.

ROS. We shall, my lord.

[*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*]

KING. Sweet Gertrude, leave us too.
For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither;
That he, as 'twere by accident, may here⁶
Affront Ophelia:⁷
Her father, and myself (lawful espials,⁸)
Will so bestow ourselves, that, seeing, unseen,
We may of their encounter frankly judge;
And gather by him, as he is behav'd,
If't be the affliction of his love, or no,
That thus he suffers for.

QUEEN.

I shall obey you:

⁶ — may here—] The folio, (I suppose by an error of the press,) reads—may there——. STEEVENS.

⁷ Affront Ophelia:] To *affront*, is only to meet directly.

JOHNSON.

Affrontare, Ital. So, in *The Devil's Charter*, 1607:

“*Affronting* that port where proud Charles should enter.”

Again, in sir W. D'Avenant's *Cruel Brother*, 1630:

“In sufferance *affronts* the winter's rage.” STEEVENS.

⁸ — *espials*,] i. e. spies. So, in *King Henry VI.* Part I:

“———— as he march'd along,

“By your *espials* were discovered

“Two mightier troops.”

See also Vol. IX. p. 535, n. 2.

The words—“lawful espials,” are found only in the folio.

STEEVENS.

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And, for your part,⁹ Ophelia, I do wish,
That your good beauties be the happy cause
Of Hamlet's wildness; so shall I hope, your virtues
Will bring him to his wonted way again,
To both your honours.

OPH. Madam, I wish it may.
[Exit QUEEN.]

POL. Ophelia, walk you here:—Gracious, so
please you,
We will bestow ourselves:—Read on this book;
[To OPHELIA.]

That show of such an exercise may colour
Your loneliness.²—We are oft to blame in this,—
'Tis too much prov'd,³—that, with devotion's visage,
And pious action, we do sugar o'er
The devil himself.

KING. O, 'tis too true! how smart
A lash that speech doth give my conscience!
The harlot's cheek, beauty'd with plastring art,
Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it,⁴
Than is my deed to my most painted word:
O heavy burden! [Aside.]

POL. I hear him coming; let's withdraw, my lord.
[Exeunt King and POLONIUS.]

⁹ *And, for your part,*] Thus the quarto, 1604, and the folio. The modern editors, following a quarto of no authority, read—*for my part.* MALONE.

² *Your loneliness.*] Thus the folio. The first and second quartos read *loneliness.* STEEVENS.

³ *'Tis too much prov'd,*] It is found by too frequent experience. JOHNSON.

⁴ — *more ugly to the thing that helps it,*] That is, compared with the thing that helps it. JOHNSON.

So, Ben Jonson:

“All that they did was piety to this.” STEEVENS.

Enter HAMLET.

HAM. To be, or not to be,^s that is the question:—
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind, to suffer

^s *To be, or not to be,*] Of this celebrated soliloquy, which bursting from a man distracted with contrariety of desires, and overwhelmed with the magnitude of his own purposes, is connected rather in the speaker's mind, than on his tongue, I shall endeavour to discover the train, and to shew how one sentiment produces another.

Hamlet, knowing himself injured in the most enormous and atrocious degree, and seeing no means of redress, but such as must expose him to the extremity of hazard, meditates on his situation in this manner: *Before I can form any rational scheme of action under this pressure of distress*, it is necessary to decide, whether, *after our present state*, we are to be, or not to be. That is the question, which, as it shall be answered, will determine, *whether 'tis nobler*, and more suitable to the dignity of reason, *to suffer the outrages of fortune* patiently, or to take arms against *them*, and by opposing end *them*, though perhaps with the loss of life. If *to die*, were *to sleep*, no more, and by a sleep to end the miseries of our nature, such a sleep were devoutly to be wished; but if *to sleep* in death, be *to dream*, to retain our powers of sensibility, we must pause to consider, *in that sleep of death what dreams may come*. This consideration makes calamity so long endured; for *who would bear the vexations of life*, which might be ended by a bare bodkin, but that he is afraid of something in unknown futurity? This fear it is that gives efficacy to conscience, which, by turning the mind upon *this regard*, chills the ardour of resolution, checks the vigour of enterprise, and makes the current of desire stagnate in inactivity.

We may suppose that he would have applied these general observations to his own case, but that he discovered Ophelia.

JOHNSON.

Dr. Johnson's explication of the first five lines of this passage is surely wrong. Hamlet is not deliberating whether after our present state we are to exist or not, but whether he should continue to live, or put an end to his life: as is pointed out by the second and the three following lines, which are manifestly a paraphrase on the first; "whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer, &c. or to take arms." The question concerning our existence in a future state is not considered till the tenth line:—"To sleep! perchance, to dream;" &c. The train of Hamlet's reasoning from the middle

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The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune;⁶
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,⁷

of the fifth line, "If to die, were to sleep," &c. Dr. Johnson has marked out with his usual accuracy.

In our poet's *Rape of Lucrece* we find the same question stated, which is proposed in the beginning of the present soliloquy:

"—— with herself she is in mutiny,

"To live or die, which of the twain were better."

MALONE.

⁶ —— arrows of outrageous fortune;] "Homines nos ut esse meminerimus, cā lege natos, ut omnibus telis fortunæ propofita fit vita noſtra." Cic. Epist. Fam. v. 16. STEEVENS.

⁷ Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,] A sea of troubles among the Greeks grew into a proverbial usage; κακῶν θαλάσση, κακῶν τροχμήϊα. So that the expression figuratively means, the troubles of human life, which flow in upon us, and encompass us round, like a sea. THEOBALD.

Mr. Pope proposed *ſiege*. I know not why there should be so much solicitude about this metaphor. Shakspeare breaks his metaphors often, and in this desultory speech there was less need of preserving them. JOHNSON.

A similar phrase occurs in Rycharde Moryſine's translation of Ludovicus Vives's *Introduction to Wyſdome*, 1544: "—— how great a sea of evils every day ouerunneth" &c.

The change, however, which Mr. Pope would recommend, may be justified from a passage in *Romeo and Juliet*, scene the last:

"You—to remove that *ſiege of grief* from her——."

STEEVENS.

One cannot but wonder that the smallest doubt should be entertained concerning an expression which is so much in Shakspeare's manner; yet, to preserve the integrity of the metaphor, Dr. Warburton reads *affail* of troubles. In the *Prometheus Vincens* of Æschylus a similar imagery is found:

Δυσχίμαιαν γὰρ πύλας ἀτρεῖας θύας.

"The stormy sea of dire calamity."

and in the same play, as an anonymous writer has observed, (*Gent. Magazine*, Aug. 1772,) we have a metaphor no less harsh than that of the text:

Θαλῆραι δὲ λόγοι παῖδός ἐϊκη

Στυγῆς πρὸς κυμασίν αὐτῆς.

"My plaintive words in vain confusedly beat

"Against the waves of hateful misery."

Shakspeare might have found the very phrase that he has em-

And, by opposing, end them?—To die,—to sleep,⁴—
 No more;—and, by a sleep, to say we end
 The heart-ach, and the thousand natural shocks
 That flesh is heir to,—'tis a consummation
 Devoutly to be wish'd. To die;—to sleep;—
 To sleep! perchance to dream;—ay, there's the rub;
 For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
 When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,⁵
 Must give us pause: There's the respect,⁶
 That makes calamity of so long life:
 For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,⁷

ployed, in *The Tragedy of Queen Cordila*, MIRROR FOR MAGISTRATES, 1575, which undoubtedly he read:

“For lacke of frendes to tell my *scas* of gilltlesse *smari*.”

MALONE.

Menander uses this very expression. *Fragm.* p. 22. Amstel. 12mo. 1719:

Εἰς πῖλαρος αὐτὸν ἐμβάλεις γὰρ πραγμάτων.

“In *mare molestarum* te conjicies.” HOLT WHITE.

⁸ — *To die,—to sleep,*] This passage is ridiculed in *The Scornful Lady* of Beaumont and Fletcher, as follows:

“—be deccas'd, that is, asleep, for so the word is taken. *To sleep, to die; to die, to sleep;* a very figure, sir.” &c. &c.

STEEVENS.

⁹ — *mortal coil,*] i. e. turmoil, bustle. WARBURTON.

A passage resembling this, occurs in a poem entitled *A dollfull Discours of two Straungers, a Lady and a Knight*, published by Churchyard, among his *Chippes*, 1575:

“Yea, *shaking off this sinfull scyle,*

“Me thincke in cloudes I see,

“Among the perfite chofen lambs,

“A place preparte for mee.” STEEVENS.

¹ — *There's the respect,*] i. e. the consideration. See Vol. XI. p. 284, n. 6. MALONE.

³ — *the whips and scorns of time,*] The evils here complained of are not the product of time or duration simply, but of a corrupted age or manners. We may be sure, then, that Shakspeare wrote:

— *the whips and scorns of th' time.*

and the description of the evils of a corrupt age, which follows, confirms this emendation. WARBURTON.

The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,⁴

It may be remarked, that Hamlet, in his enumeration of miseries, forgets, whether properly or not, that he is a prince, and mentions many evils to which inferior stations only are exposed.

JOHNSON.

I think we might venture to read—*the whips and scorns o' the times*, i. e. of times satirical as the age of Shakspeare, which probably furnished him with the idea.

In the reigns of Elizabeth and James (particularly in the former) there was more illiberal private abuse and peevish satire published, than in any others I ever knew of, except the present one. I have many of these publications, which were almost all pointed at individuals.

Daniel, in his *Musophilus*, 1599, has the same complaint :

“ Do you not see these pamphlets, *libels*, rhimes,

“ These strange confused tumults of the mind,

“ Are grown to be the sickness of *these times*,

“ The great disease inflicted on mankind ?”

Whips and *scorns* are surely as inseparable companions, as publick punishment and infamy.

Quips, the word which Dr. Johnson would introduce, is derived, by all etymologists, from *whips*.

Hamlet is introduced as reasoning on a question of general concernment. He therefore takes in all such evils as could befall mankind in general, without considering himself at present as a prince, or wishing to avail himself of the few exemptions which high place might once have claimed.

In part of King James 1st *Entertainment passing to his Coronation*, by Ben Jonson and Decker, is the following line, and note on that line:

“ *And first account of years, of months, OF TIME.*”

“ By *time* we understand *the present*.” This explanation affords the sense for which I have contended, and without change.

STEEVENS.

The word *whips* is used by Marston in his *Satires*, 1599, in the sense required here :

“ Ingenuous melancholy,——

“ Inthroned thee in my blood ; let me entreat,

“ Stay his quick jocund skips, and force him run

“ A sad-pac'd course, untill my *whips* be done.”

MALONE.

⁴ — *the proud man's contumely,*] Thus the quarto. The

The pangs of despis'd love,⁵ the law's delay,
 The insolence of office, and the spurns
 That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
 When he himself might his quietus make
 With a bare bodkin?⁶ who would fardels bear,

folio reads—the *poor* man's contumely; the contumely which the poor man is obliged to endure :

“ Nil habet infelix paupertas durius in se,

“ Quam quod ridiculos homines facit.” MALONE.

⁵ — of despis'd love,] The folio reads—of *dispriz'd* love.

STEVENS.

⁶ — might his quietus make

With a bare bodkin?] The first expression probably alluded to the writ of discharge, which was formerly granted to those barons and knights who personally attended the king on any foreign expedition. This discharge was called a *quietus*.

It is at this time the term for the acquittance which every sheriff receives on settling his accounts at the exchequer.

The word is used for the discharge of an account, by Webster, in his *Duchess of Malfy*, 1623 :

“ And 'cause you shall not come to me in debt,

“ (Being now my steward) here upon your lips

“ I sign your *quietus est*.”

Again :

“ You had the trick in audit time to be sick,

“ Till I had sign'd your *quietus*.”

A *bodkin* was the ancient term for a *small dagger*. So, in the Second Part of *The Mirrour for Knighthood*, 4to. bl. l. 1598 =

“ — Not having any more weapons but a poor poynado, which usually he did weare about him, and taking it in his hand, delivered these speeches unto it. Thou, silly *bodkin*, shalt finish the piece of worke,” &c.

In the margin of Stowe's Chronicle, edit. 1614, it is said, that Cæsar was slain with *bodkins*; and in *The Muses' Looking-glass*, by Randolph, 1638 :

“ *Apho.* A rapier's but a *bodkin*.

“ *Dial.* And a *bodkin*

“ Is a most dang'rous weapon; since I read

“ Of Julius Cæsar's death, I durst not venture

“ Into a taylor's shop, for fear of *bodkins*.”

Again, in *The Custom of the Country*, by Beaumont and Fletcher :

“ — Out with your *bodkin*,

“ Your pocket dagger, your stiletto.”—

To grunt and sweat⁷ under a weary life;
But that the dread of something after death,—

Again, in *Sapbo and Phao*, 1591: “ — there will be a desperate fray between two, made at all weapons, from the brown bill to the *bodkin*.”

Again, in Chaucer, as he is quoted at the end of a pamphlet called *The Serpent of Division, &c. whereunto is annexed the Tragedy of Gorboduc, &c.* 1591:

“ With *bodkins* was Cæsar Julius

“ Murdered at Rome of Brutus Crassus.” STEEVENS.

By a *bare bodkin*, does not perhaps mean, “ by so little an instrument as a dagger,” but “ by an *unbeathed dagger*.”

In the account which Mr. Steevens has given of the original meaning of the term *quietus*, after the words, “ who personally attended the king on any foreign expedition,” should have been added,—and were therefore exempted from the claims of *scutage*, or a tax on every knight's fee.” MALONE.

⁷ *To grunt and sweat*—] Thus the old copies. It is undoubtedly the true reading, but can scarcely be borne by modern ears.

JOHNSON.

This word occurs in *The Death of Zoroas*, by Nicholas Grimald, a translation of a passage in the *Alexandreis* of Philippe Gaultier, into blank verse, printed at the end of *Lord Surry's Poems*:

“ ——— none the charge could give :

“ Here *grunts*, here grones, echwhere strong youth is spent.”

And Stanyhurst in his translation of Virgil, 1582, for *supremum conseruit* gives us: “ — for fighting it *grunts*.”

The change made by the editors [to *groan*] is however supported by the following lines in *Julius Cæsar*, Act IV. sc. i:

“ To *groan* and sweat under the business.” STEEVENS.

I apprehend that it is the duty of an editor to exhibit what his author wrote, and not to substitute what may appear to the present age preferable: and Dr. Johnson was of the same opinion. See his note on the word *bugger-mugger*, Act IV. sc. v. I have therefore, though with some reluctance, adhered to the old copies, however unpleasant this word may be to the ear. On the stage, without doubt, an actor is at liberty to substitute a less offensive word. To the ears of our ancestors it probably conveyed no unpleasant sound; for we find it used by Chaucer and others:

The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn
No traveller returns,^s—puzzles the will;

" But never *gront* he at no stroke but on,
" Or elles at two, but if his storie lie."

The Monkes Tale, v. 14627, Tyrwhitt's edit.

Again, in *Wily Beguil'd*, written before 1596:

" She's never well, but *grunting* in a corner." MALONE.

^s *The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn*

No traveller returns,] This has been cavilled at by Lord Orrery and others, but without reason. The idea of a *traveller* in Shakspeare's time, was of a person who gave an account of his adventures. Every voyage was a *Discovery*. John Taylor has "*A Discovery by sea from London to Salisbury.*" FARMER.

Again, Marston's *Insatiate Countess*, 1603:

" ————— wrestled with death,

" From whose stern cave none tracks a backward path."

" Qui nunc it per iter tenebricosum

" Illuc unde negant redire quenquam." *Catullus*.

Again, in Sanford's translation of *Cornelius Agrippa*, &c. 4to. bl. l. 1569 (once a book of uncommon popularity) "*The countrie of the dead is irremeable, that they cannot retourne.*" Sig. P p.

STEEVENS.

This passage has been objected to by others on a ground which, at the first view of it, seems more plausible. Hamlet himself, it is objected, has had ocular demonstration that travellers do sometimes return from this strange country.

I formerly thought this an inconsistency. But this objection also is founded on a mistake. Our poet without doubt in the passage before us intended to say, that from the *unknown* regions of the dead no traveller returns, with all his *corporal* powers; such as he who goes on a voyage of *discovery* brings back, when he returns to the port from which he sailed. The traveller whom Hamlet had seen, though he appeared in the same habit which he had worn in his life time, was nothing but a shadow; "*invulnerable as the air,*" and consequently *incorporeal*.

If, says the objector, the traveller has once reached this coast, it is not an undiscovered country. But by *undiscovered* Shakspeare meant not undiscovered by departed spirits, but, undiscovered, or unknown to "*such fellows as us, who crawl beneath earth and heaven;*" *superis incognita tellus*. In this sense every country, of which the traveller does not return *alive* to give an account, may be said to be *undiscovered*. The ghost has given us no account of

And makes us rather bear those ills we have,
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought;
And enterprizes of great pith⁹ and moment,
With this regard, their currents turn awry,²
And lose the name of action.—Soft you, now!
The fair Ophelia:—Nymph, in thy orisons
Be all my fins remember'd.³

OPH.

Good my lord,

the region from whence he came, being, as he has himself informed us, "forbid to tell the secrets of his prison-house."

Marlowe, before our poet, had compared death to a journey to an undiscovered country:

" ——— weep not for Mortimer,

" That scorns the world, and, as a traveller,

" Goes to discover countries yet unknown."

King Edward II. 1598 (written before 1593).

MALONE.

Perhaps this is another instance of Shakspeare's acquaintance with his Bible: "Afore I goe thither, from whence I shall not turne againe, even to the lande of darkenesse and shadowe of death; yea into that darke cloudie lande and deadlie shadowe whereas is no order, but terrible feare as in the darknesse." *Job*, ch. x.

"The way that I must goe is at hande, but whence I shall not turne againe." *Ibid.* ch. 16.

I quote Cranmer's Bible. DOUCE.

⁹ — great pith—] Thus the folio. The quartos read,—of great pith. STEEVENS.

Pith seems to be the better reading. The allusion is to the *pitching* or throwing *the bar*;—a manly exercise, usual in country villages. RITSON.

² — turn awry,] Thus the quartos. The folio—turn away.

STEEVENS.

³ — Nymph, in thy orisons &c.] This is a touch of nature. Hamlet, at the sight of Ophelia, does not immediately recollect, that he is to personate madness, but makes her an address grave and solemn, such as the foregoing meditation excited in his thoughts. JOHNSON.

How does your honour for this many a day?

HAM. I humbly thank you; well.

OPH. My lord, I have remembrances of yours,
That I have longed long to re-deliver;
I pray you, now receive them.

HAM. No, not I;
I never gave you aught.

OPH. My honour'd lord, you know right well,
you did;
And, with them, words of so sweet breath compos'd
As made the things more rich: their perfume lost,
Take these again; for to the noble mind,
Rich gifts wax poor, when givers prove unkind.
There, my lord.

HAM. Ha, ha! are you honest?

OPH. My lord?

HAM. Are you fair?

OPH. What means your lordship?

HAM. That if you be honest, and fair, you should
admit no discourse to your beauty.⁴

⁴ *That if you be honest, and fair, you should admit no discourse to your beauty.*] This is the reading of all the modern editions, and is copied from the quarto. The folio reads,—*your honesty* should admit no discourse to your beauty. The true reading seems to be this,—*If you be honest and fair, you should admit your honesty to no discourse with your beauty.* This is the sense evidently required by the process of the conversation. JOHNSON.

That if you be honest and fair, you should admit no discourse to your beauty.] The reply of Ophelia proves beyond doubt, that this reading is wrong.

The reading of the folio appears to be the right one, and requires no amendment.—“Your honesty should admit no discourse to your beauty,” means,—“Your honesty should not admit your beauty to any discourse with her;” which is the very sense that Johnson contends for, and expressed with sufficient clearness.

M. MASON.

OPH. Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce than with honesty?

HAM. Ay, truly; for the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is to a bawd, than the force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness:⁵ this was some time a paradox, but now the time gives it proof. I did love you once.

OPH. Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

HAM. You should not have believed me: for virtue cannot so inoculate⁶ our old stock, but we shall relish of it: I loved you not.

OPH. I was the more deceived.

HAM. Get thee to a nunnery; Why would'st thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest; but yet I could accuse me of such things, that it were better, my mother had not borne me:⁷ I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious; with more offences at my beck, than I have thoughts to put them in,⁸ imagination to give them shape,

⁵ —into his likeness:] The modern editors read—*its* likeness; but the text is right. Shakspeare and his contemporaries frequently use the personal for the neutral pronoun. So Spenser, *Faery Queen*, Book III. ch. ix:

“Then forth *it* breaks; and with *his* furious blast,

“Confounds both land and seas, and skies doth overcast.”

See p. 65, n. 6. MALONE.

⁶ —inoculate—] This is the reading of the first folio. The first quarto reads *enaculat*; the second *enacuat*; and the third, *evacuate*. STEEVENS.

⁷ —I could accuse me of such things, that it were better, my mother had not borne me:] So, in our poet's 88th Sonnet:

“—I can set down a story

“Of faults conceal'd, wherein I am attainted.” MALONE.

⁸ —with more offences at my beck, than I have thoughts to put them in,] To put a thing into thought, is to think on it. JOHNSON.

—at my beck,] That is, always ready to come about me.

STEEVENS.

or time to act them in: What should such fellows as I do crawling between earth and heaven? We are arrant knaves, all; believe none of us: Go thy ways to a nunnery. Where's your father?

OPH. At home, my lord.

HAM. Let the doors be shut upon him; that he may play the fool no where but in's own house. Farewell.

OPH. O, help him, you sweet heavens!

HAM. If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry; Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a nunnery; farewell: Or, if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool; for wise men know well enough, what monsters you make of them. To a nunnery, go; and quickly too. Farewell.

OPH. Heavenly powers, restore him!

HAM. I have heard of your paintings too, well enough;^s God hath given you one face, and you

^s *I have heard of your paintings too, well enough; &c.*] This is according to the quarto; the folio, for *painting*, has *prattlings*, and for *face*, has *pace*, which agrees with what follows, *you jig, you amble*. Probably the author wrote both. I think the common reading best. JOHNSON.

I would continue to read, *paintings*, because these destructive aids of beauty seem, in the time of Shakspeare, to have been general objects of satire. So, in Drayton's *Mooncalf*:

“ — No sooner got the teens,
 “ But her own natural beauty she disdains;
 “ With oyls and broths most venomous and base
 “ She plaisters over her well-favour'd face;
 “ And those sweet veins by nature rightly plac'd
 “ Wherewith she seems that white skin to have lac'd,
 “ She soon doth alter; and, with fading blue,
 “ Blanching her bosom, she makes others new.”

STEEVENS.

make yourselves another:⁹ you jig, you amble, and you lisp, and nick-name God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance:^a Go to; I'll no more of't; it hath made me mad. I say, we will have no more marriages: those that are married already, all but one, shall live;³ the rest shall keep as they are. To a nunnery, go. [*Exit HAMLET.*

OPH. O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!
The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue,
sword:⁴

The expectancy and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion,⁵ and the mould of form,⁶
The observ'd of all observers! quite, quite down!

⁹ — *God hath given you one face, and you make yourselves another:*] In *Guzman de Alfarache*, 1623, p. 13, we have an invective against painting in which is a similar passage: "O filthiness, above all filthiness! O affront, above all other affronts! *that God having given thee one face, thou shouldst abuse his image and make thyselfe another.*" REED.

^a — *make your wantonness your ignorance:*] You mistake by wanton affectation, and pretend to mistake by ignorance.

JOHNSON.

³ — *all but one, shall live;*] By the one who shall not live, he means his step-father. MALONE.

⁴ *The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword:*] The poet certainly meant to have placed his words thus:

The courtier's, scholar's, soldier's, eye, tongue, sword;
otherwise the excellence of *tongue* is appropriated to the *soldier*, and the *scholar* wears the *sword*. WARNER.

This regulation is needless. So, in *Tarquin and Lucrece*:

"Princes are the *glass*, the *school*, the *book*,

"Where subjects eyes do *learn*, do *read*, do *look*."

And in *Quintilian*: "Multum agit *sexus*, *ætas*, *conditio*; ut in *senibus*, *senibus*, *pupillis*, *liberos*, *parentes*, *conjuges*, *alligantibus*."

FARMER.

⁵ *The glass of fashion,*] "Speculum consuetudinis." Cicero.

STEEVENS.

⁶ — *the mould of form,*] The model by whom all endeavoured to form themselves. JOHNSON.

And I, of ladies most deject⁷ and wretched,
 That suck'd the honey of his musick vows,
 Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,
 Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune⁸ and harsh;
 That unmatch'd form and feature⁹ of blown youth,
 Blasted with ecstasy:² O, woe is me!
 To have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

Re-enter King and POLONIUS.

KING. Love! his affections do not that way
 tend;
 Nor what he spake, though it lack'd form a little,
 Was not like madness. There's something in his
 soul,
 O'er which his melancholy sits on brood;
 And, I do doubt, the hatch, and the disclose,³

⁷ ——— *most deject* —] So, in Heywood's *Silver Age*, 1613:

“ ——— What knight is that

“ So passionately *deject*?” STEEVENS.

⁸ ——— *out of tune* —] Thus the folio. The quarto—out of
time. STEEVENS.

These two words in the hand-writing of Shakspeare's age are
 almost indistinguishable, and hence are frequently confounded in
 the old copies. See Vol. IV. p. 63, n. 8. MALONE.

⁹ ——— *and feature* —] Thus the folio. The quartos read—
feature. STEEVENS.

² ——— *with ecstasy* :] The word *ecstasy* was anciently used to
 signify some degree of alienation of mind.

So, Gawin Douglas, translating—*stetit acri fixa dolore*:

“ In *ecstasy* she stood, and mad almost.”

See Vol. III. p. 113, n. 9; and Vol. VII. p. 464, n. 4.

STEEVENS,

³ ——— *the disclose*,] This was the technical term. So, in *The
 Maid of Honour*, by Massinger:

“ One aerie with proportion ne'er *discloses*

“ The eagle and the wren.” MALONE.

Will be some danger: Which for to prevent,
I have, in quick determination,
Thus set it down; He shall with speed to England,
For the demand of our neglected tribute:
Haply, the seas, and countries different,
With variable objects, shall expel
This something-settled matter in his heart;
Whereon his brains still beating, puts him thus
From fashion of himself. What think you on't?

POL. It shall do well: But yet I do believe,
The origin and commencement of his grief
Sprung from neglected love.—How now, Ophelia?
You need not tell us what lord Hamlet said;
We heard it all.—My lord, do as you please;
But, if you hold it fit, after the play,
Let his queen mother all alone entreat him
To show his grief; let her be round with him;⁴
And I'll be plac'd, so please you, in the ear
Of all their conference: If she find him not,
To England send him; or confine him, where
Your wisdom best shall think.

KING. It shall be so:
Madness in great ones must not unwatch'd go.
[*Exeunt.*]

Again, in the fifth act of the play now before us:

“ Ere that her golden couplets are *disclos'd*.”

See my note on this passage. STEEVENS.

⁴ — *be round with him* ;] To be *round* with a person, is to reprimand him with freedom. So, in *A Mad World, my Masters*, by Middleton, 1608: “ She’s *round* with her i’faith.” MALONE.

See Vol. VII. p. 229, n. 4. STEEVENS.

S C E N E II.

*A Hall in the same.**Enter HAMLET, and certain Players.*

HAM. Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue: but if you mouth it, as many of our players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus; but use all gently: for in the very torrent, tempest, and (as I may say) whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance, that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul, to hear a robustious perriwig-pated⁵ fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings;⁶ who, for the most part, are capable

⁵ ——— perriwig-pated—] This is a ridicule on the quantity of false hair worn in Shakspeare's time, for wigs were not in common use till the reign of Charles II. In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Julia says—"I'll get me such a colour'd perriwig."

Goff, who wrote several plays in the reign of James I. and was no mean scholar, has the following lines in his tragedy of *The Courageous Turk*, 1632:

"————— How now, you heavens,

"Grow you so proud you must needs put on curl'd locks,

"And clothe yourselves in perriwigs of fire?"

Players, however, seem to have worn them most generally. So, in *Every Woman in her Humour*, 1609: "——— as none wear hoods but monks and ladies; and feathers but fore-horses, &c;—none perriwigs but players and pictures. STEVENS.

⁶ ——— the groundlings;] The meaner people then seem to have sat below, as they now sit in the upper gallery, who, not well understanding poetical language, were sometimes gratified by a

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of nothing but inexplicable dumb shows, and noise :¹

mimical and mute representation of the drama, previous to the dialogue. JOHNSON.

Before each act of the tragedy of *Jocasta*, translated from Euripides, by Geo. Gascoigne and Fra. Kinwelmerth, the order of these dumb shows is very minutely described. This play was presented at Gray's-Inn by them in 1566. The mute exhibitions included in it are chiefly emblematical, nor do they display a picture of one single scene which is afterwards performed on the stage. In some other pieces I have observed, that they serve to introduce such circumstances as the limits of a play would not admit to be represented.

Thus, in *Herod and Antipater*, 1622:

“ ——— Let me now
 “ Intreat your worthy patience to contain
 “ Much in imagination; and, what words
 “ Cannot have time to utter, let your eyes,
 “ Out of this DUMB SHOW, tell your memories.”

In short dumb shows sometimes supplied deficiencies, and, at others, filled up the space of time which was necessary to pass while business was supposed to be transacted in foreign parts. With this method of preserving one of the unities, our ancestors appear to have been satisfied.

Ben Jonson mentions the *groundlings* with equal contempt. “ The understanding gentlemen of the *ground* here.”

Again, in *The Case is Alter'd*, 1609: “ ——— a rude barbarous crew that have no brains, and yet *grounded* judgements; they will kiss any thing that mounts above their *grounded* capacities.”

Again, in *Lady Alimony*, 1659: “ Be your stage-curtains artificially drawn, and so covertly shrowded that the *squint-ey'd groundling* may not peep in !”

In our early play-houses the pit had neither floor nor benches. Hence the term of *groundlings* for those who frequented it.

The *groundling*, in its primitive signification, means a fish which always keeps at the bottom of the water. STEEVENS.

¹ ——— *who, for the most part, are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb shows, and noise :*] i. e. have a capacity for nothing but dumb shows; understand nothing else. So, in Heywood's *History of Women*, 1624: “ I have therein imitated our *historical* and *comical* poets, that write to the stage; who, lest the auditory should be dulled with serious discourses, in every act present some zany, with his mimick gesture, to breed in the less *capable* mirth and laughter. See Vol. X. p. 563, n. 4. MALONE.

I would have such a fellow whipp'd for o'er-doing Termagant;⁸ it out-herods Herod:⁹ Pray you, avoid it.

— *inexplicable dumb shows,*] I believe the meaning is, *shows, without words to explain them.* JOHNSON.

Rather, I believe, shows which are too confusedly conducted to explain themselves.

I meet with one of these in Heywood's play of *The Four Prentices of London*, 1615, where the *Presenter* says:

" I must entreat your patience to forbear
 " While we do feast your eye and starve your ear.
 " For in *dumb shows*, which, were they writ at large,
 " Would ask a long and tedious circumstance,
 " Their infant fortunes I will soon express:" &c.

Then follow the *dumb shows*, which well deserve the character Hamlet has already given of this species of entertainment, as may be seen from the following passage: " Enter Tancred, with Bella Franca richly attired, she *somewhat affecting him*, though she *makes no show of it.*" Surely this may be called an *inexplicable dumb show*. STEEVENS.

⁸ — *Termagant*;] *Termagaunt* (says Dr. Percy) is the name given in the old romances to the god of the *Sarazens*; in which he is constantly linked with *Mabound*, or *Mohammed*. Thus in the legend of *SYR GUY*, the Soudan swears:

" So helpe me *Mabowne* of might,
 " And *Termagaunt* my God so bright."

So also, in Hall's first Satire:

" Nor fright the reader with the Pagan vaunt
 " Of mightie *Mabound*, and greate *Termagaunt*."

Again, in Marston's 7th Satire:

" — let whirlwinds and confusion teare
 " The center of our state; let giants reare
 " Hill upon hill; let westerne *Termagant*
 " Shake heaven's vault" &c.

Termagant is also mentioned by Spenser in his *Faery Queen*, and by Chaucer in *The Tale of Sir Topas*; and by Beaumont and Fletcher in *King or no King*, as follows: " This would make a faint swear like a soldier, and a soldier like *Termagant*."

Again, in *The Picture*, by Massinger:

" — a hundred thousand Turks
 " Assail'd him, every one a *Termagaunt*." STEEVENS.

Again, in Bale's *Acts of English Vtaries*:

" Grennyng upon her, lyke *Termagauntes* in a play."

RITSON.

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I. PLAY. I warrant your honour.

HAM. Be not too tame neither, but let your own

9 ——— *ant-herods* Herod:] The character of *Herod* in the ancient mysteries, was always a violent one.

See the *Coventrie Ludus* among the Cotton MSS. Vespasian D. VIII:

“ Now I regne lyk a kyng arayd ful rych,
 “ Rollyd in rynggs and robys of array,
 “ Dukys with dentys I drive into the dych;
 “ My dedys be full dowty demyd be day.”

Again, in *The Chester Whitsun Plays*, MS. Harl. 1013:

“ I kyng of kynges, non foe keene,
 “ I sovraigne fir, as well is seene,
 “ I tyrant that maye bouth take and teene
 “ Castell, tower, and towne;
 “ I welde this worlde withouten wene,
 “ I beate all those unbuxome beene;
 “ I drive the devills alby dene
 “ Deepe in hell adowne.
 “ For I am kinge of all mankinde,
 “ I byd, I beate, I lose, I bynde,
 “ I master the moone; take this in mynde
 “ That I am most of mighte.
 “ I ame the greatest above degree,
 “ That is, that was, or ever shall be;
 “ The sonne it dare not shine on me,
 “ And I byd him goe downe.
 “ No raine to fall shall now be free,
 “ Nor no lorde have that liberty
 “ That dare abyde and I byd fleey,
 “ But I shall crake his crowne.”

See *The Vintner's Play*, p. 67.

Chaucer, describing a parish clerk, in his *Miller's Tale*, says:

“ He playeth *Herodes* on a skaffold high.”

The parish clerks and other subordinate ecclesiasticks appear to have been our first actors, and to have represented their characters on distinct pulpits or *scaffolds*. Thus, in one of the stage-directions to the 27th pageant in the Coventry collection already mentioned: “What tyme that processyon is entered into y^e place, and the Herowdys taken his *scaffalde*, and Annas and Cayphas their *scaffeldys*,” &c. STEEVENS.

discretion be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance, that you o'er-step not the modesty of nature: for any thing so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first, and now, was, and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time,² his form and preffure.³ Now this, over-

To the instances given by Mr. Steevens of Herod's lofty language, may be added these lines from the Coventry plays among the Cotton MSS. p. 92:

"Of bewte and of boldnes I ber evermore the belle,
 "Of mayn and of myght I master every man;
 "I dyngc with my downtinefs the devyl down to helle,
 "For bothe of hevyn and of earth I am kynge certayn."

MALONE.

Again, in *The Unluckie Firmentie*, by G. Kyttes, 4to. bl. 1:

"But he was in such a rage
 "As one that shulde on a stage
 "The part of *Herode* playc." RITSON.

² — age and body of the time,] The age of the time can hardly pass. May we not read, the face and body, or did the author write, the page? The page suits well with form and preffure, but ill with body. JOHNSON.

To exhibit the form and preffure of the age of the time, is, to represent the manners of the time suitable to the period that is treated of, according as it may be ancient, or modern.

STEEVENS.

I can neither think this passage right as it stands, or approve of either of the amendments suggested by Johnson.—There is one more simple than either, that will remove every difficulty. Instead of "*the very age and body of the time*," (from which it is hard to extract any meaning,) I read—"every age and body of the time;" and then the sense will be this:—"Show virtue her own likeness, and every stage of life, every profession or body of men, its form and resemblance." By every age, is meant the different stages of life;—by every body, the various fraternities, sorts, and ranks of mankind. M. MASON.

Perhaps Shakspeare did not mean to connect these words. It is

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done, or come tardy off, though it make the un-
skilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve;
the censure of which one,⁴ must, in your allowance,⁵
o'er-weigh a whole theatre of others. O, there be
players,⁶ that I have seen play,—and heard others

the end of playing, says Hamlet, to shew the age in which we live,
and the body of the time, its form and pressure: to delineate ex-
actly the manners of the age, and the particular humour of the
day. MALONE.

³ ——— *pressure.*] Resemblance, as in a *print*. JOHNSON.

⁴ ——— *the censure of which one, &c.*] Ben Jonson seems to have
imitated this passage in his *Poetaster*, 1601:

“ ——— I will try
“ If tragedy have a more kind aspect;
“ Her favours in my next I will pursue;
“ Where if I prove the *pleasure but of one*,
“ *If he judicious be, he shall be alone*
“ *A theatre unto me.*” MALONE.

——— *the censure of which one,*] The meaning is, “ the censure
of one of which,” and probably that should be the reading also.
The present reading, though intelligible, is very licentious, espe-
cially in prose. M. MASON.

⁵ ——— *in your allowance,*] In your approbation. See Vol. XIV.
p. 129, n. 3. MALONE.

⁶ O, *there be players, &c.*] I would read thus: “ There be
players, that I have seen play, and heard others praise, and that
highly (not to speak profanely) that neither having the accent nor
the gait of Christian, Pagan, nor *Mussulman*, have so strutted and
bellowed, that I thought some of nature’s journeymen had made
the men, and not made them well,” &c. FARMER.

I have no doubt that our author wrote,—“ that I thought some
of nature’s journeymen had made *them*, and not made them
well,” &c. *Them* and *men* are frequently confounded in the old
copies. See the *Comedy of Errors*, Act II. sc. ii. folio, 1623:—
“ because it is a blessing that he bestows on beasts, and what he
hath scanted *them* [*r. men*] in hair, he hath given them in wit.”—
In the present instance the compositor probably caught the word
men from the last syllable of *journeymen*. Shakspeare could not
mean to assert as a general truth, that nature’s journeymen had
made *men*, i. e. all mankind; for, if that were the case, *these*

praise, and that highly,—not to speak it profanely,⁷ that, neither having the accent of christians, nor the gait of christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted, and bellow'd, that I have thought some of nature's journeymen had made men, and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably.

1. *PLAR.* I hope, we have reform'd that indifferently with us.

HAM O, reform it altogether. And let those, that play your clowns, speak no more than is set down for them:⁸ for there be of them, that will

strutting players would have been on a footing with the rest of the species. Nature herself, the poet means to say, made all mankind except these strutting players, and they were made by Nature's journeymen.

A passage in *King Lear*, in which we meet with the same sentiment, in my opinion fully supports the emendation now proposed:

“*Kent.* Nature disclaims in *THEE*, a tailor made *THEE*.”

“*Corn.* Thou art a strange fellow: A tailor make a man!

“*Kent.* Ay, a tailor, fir; a stone-cutter or a painter [*Nature's journeymen*] could not have made *him* so ill, though he had been but two hours at the trade.”

This notion of Nature keeping a shop, and employing journeymen to form mankind, was common in Shakspeare's time. See Lyly's *Woman in the Moon*, a comedy, 1597: “They draw the curtains from before *Nature's shop*, where stands an image clad, and some unclad.” MALONE.

⁷ — *not to speak it profanely,*] *Profanely* seems to relate, not to the praise which he has mentioned, but to the censure which he is about to utter. Any gross or indelicate language was called *profane*. JOHNSON.

So, in *Othello*:—“he is a most *profane* and liberal counsellor.”

MALONE.

⁸ — *speak no more than is set down for them:]* So, in *The Antipodes*, by Brome, 1638:

“—you, fir, are incorrigible, and

“Take licence to yourself to add unto

“Your parts, your own free fancy,” &c.

“—That is a way, my lord, has been allow'd

themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too; though, in the mean time, some necessary question of the play be then to be considered: that's villainous; and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it. Go, make you ready.—
[*Exeunt* Players.]

Enter POLONIUS, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.

How now, my lord? will the king hear this piece of work?

POL. And the queen too, and that presently.

"On elder stages, to move mirth and laughter."

"——Yes, in the days of *Tarlton*, and of *Kempe*,

"Before the stage was purg'd from barbarism," &c.

Stowe informs us, (p. 697, edit. 1615), that among the twelve players who were sworn the queen's servants in 1583, "were two rare men, viz. Thomas Willon, for a quick delicate refined *extemporall witte*; and Richard Tarleton, for a wondrous plentiful, pleasant *extemporall witte*," &c.

Again, in *Tarleton's Neues from Purgatory*: "——I absented myself from all plaies, as wanting that merrie Roscius of plaiers that famosed all comedies so with his pleasant and *extemporall invention*."

This cause for complaint, however, against low comedians, is still more ancient; for in *The Contention betwixte Churchyard and Camell*, &c. 1560, I find the following passage:

"But Vices in stage plaies,

"When theyr matter is gon,

"They laugh out the rest

"To the lookers on.

"And so wantinge matter,

"You brynge in my coate," &c. STEEVENS.

The clown very often addressed the audience, in the middle of the play, and entered into a contest of raillery and sarcasm with such of the audience as chose to engage with him. It is to this absurd practice that Shakspeare alludes. See the *Historical Account of our old English Theatres*, Vol. II. MALONE.

HAM. Bid the players make haste.—

[Exit POLONIUS.]

Will you two help to hasten them?

BOTH. Ay, my lord.

[Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.]

HAM. What, ho; Horatio!

Enter HORATIO.

HOR. Here, sweet lord, at your service.

HAM. Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man
As e'er my conversation cop'd withal.

HOR. O, my dear lord,—

HAM. Nay, do not think I flatter:
For what advancement may I hope from thee,
That no revenue hast, but thy good spirits,
To feed, and clothe thee? Why should the poor
be flatter'd?

No, let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp;
And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee,⁹
Where thrift may follow fawning. Dost thou hear?
Since my dear soul² was mistress of her choice,
And could of men distinguish her election,
She hath seal'd thee for herself:³ for thou hast been

⁹ — *the pregnant hinges of the knee,*] I believe the sense of *pregnant* in this place is, *quick, ready, prompt.* JOHNSON.

See Vol. IV. p. 182, n. 6. STEEVENS.

² — *my dear soul*—] Perhaps—*my dear soul.* JOHNSON.

Dear soul is an expression equivalent to the *φίλη γυναικα, φίλη ἄνδρα*, of Homer. STEEVENS.

³ *And could of men distinguish her election,*
She hath seal'd thee for herself:] Thus the quarto. The folio thus:

And could of men distinguish, her election
Hath seal'd thee &c. STEEVENS.

As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing;
 A man, that fortune's buffets and rewards
 Hast ta'en with equal thanks: and blest'd are those,
 Whose blood and judgement are so well co-mingled,⁵
 That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger
 To sound what stop she please: Give me that man
 That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
 In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,
 As I do thee.—Something too much of this.—
 There is a play to-night before the king;
 One scene of it comes near the circumstance,
 Which I have told thee of my father's death.
 I pr'ythee, when thou seest that act a-foot,
 Even with the very comment of thy soul
 Observe my uncle: if his occulted guilt
 Do not itself unkennel in one speech,
 It is a damned ghost that we have seen;
 And my imaginations are as foul
 As Vulcan's stithy.⁶ Give him heedful note:

Mr. Ritson prefers the reading of the quarto, and observes, that to *distinguish her election*, is no more than to *make her election*. *Distinguish of men*, he adds, is exceeding harsh, to say the best of it.

REED.

⁴ *Whose blood and judgement—*] According to the doctrine of the four humours, *desire* and *confidence* were seated in the blood, and *judgement* in the phlegm, and the due mixture of the humours made a perfect character. JOHNSON.

⁵ *—co-mingled,*] Thus the folio. The quarto reads—*comedled*; which had formerly the same meaning, MALONE.

⁶ *—Vulcan's stithy.*] *Stithy* is a smith's anvil. JOHNSON.

So, in *Troilus and Cressida*:

“Now by the *forge* that *stithied* Mars's helm.”

Again, in Greene's *Card of Fancy*, 1608: “determined to strike on the *stith* while the iron was hot.”

Again, in Chaucer's celebrated description of the *Temple of Mars*, Mr. Tyrwhitt's edit. ver. 2028:

“——— the smith

“That forgeth sharp swerdes on his *stith*.” STEEVENS.

For I mine eyes will rivet to his face;
And, after, we will both our judgements join
In censure of his seeming.

HOR. Well, my lord:
If he steal aught, the whilst this play is playing,
And scape detecting, I will pay the theft.

HAM. They are coming to the play; I must be
idle:
Get you a place.

*Danish march. A flourish. Enter King, Queen,
POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDEN-
STERN, and Others.*

KING. How fares our cousin Hamlet?

HAM. Excellent, i'faith; of the camelion's dish:
I eat the air, promise-cramm'd: You cannot feed
capons so.

KING. I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet;
these words are not mine.

HAM. No, nor mine now.⁷ My lord,—you
play'd once in the university, you say?⁸
[*To POLONIUS.*

⁷ — *nor mine now.*] A man's words, says the proverb, are his own no longer than he keeps them unspoken. JOHNSON.

⁸ — *you play'd once in the university, you say?*] It should seem from the following passage in Vice Chancellor Hatcher's letter to Lord Burghley on June 21, 1580, that the common players were likewise occasionally admitted to perform there: "Whereas it hath pleased your honour to recommend my lorde of Oxenford his players, that they might show their cunning in several plays already practised by 'em before the Queen's majesty"——(denied on account of the pestilence and commencement:) "of late we denied the like to the Right Honourable the Lord of Leicester his servants." FARMER.

The practice of acting Latin plays in the universities of Oxford

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POL. That did I, my lord; and was accounted a good actor.

HAM. And what did you enact?

POL. I did enact Julius Cæsar:⁹ I was kill'd i'the Capitol;¹ Brutus kill'd me.

and Cambridge, is very ancient, and continued to near the middle of the last century. They were performed occasionally for the entertainment of princes and other great personages; and regularly at Christmas, at which time a *Lord of misrule* was appointed at Oxford, to regulate the exhibitions, and a similar officer with the title of *Imperator*, at Cambridge. The most celebrated actors at Cambridge were the students of St. John's and King's colleges: at Oxford, those of Christ-Church. In the hall of that college a Latin comedy called *Marcus Geminus*, and the Latin tragedy of *Progne*, were performed before Queen Elizabeth in the year 1566; and in 1564, the Latin tragedy of *Dido* was played before her majesty, when she visited the university of Cambridge. The exhibition was in the body or nave of the chapel of King's college, which was lighted by the royal guards, each of whom bore a staff-torch in his hand. See Peck's *Desider. Cur.* p. 36, n. x. The actors in this piece were all of that college. The author of the tragedy, who in the Latin account of this royal visit, in the Museum, [MSS. Baker, 7037, p. 203,] is said to have been *Regalis Collegii olim socius*, was, I believe, John Rightwile, who was elected a fellow of King's college, in 1507, and according to Anthony Wood, "made the tragedy of *Dido* out of Virgil, and acted the same with the scholars of his school [St. Paul's, of which he was appointed master in 1522,] before Cardinal Wolsey with great applause." In 1583, the same play was performed at Oxford, in Christ-Church hall, before Albertus de Alasco, a Polish prince Palatine, as was William Gager's Latin comedy, entitled *Rivales*. On Elizabeth's second visit to Oxford, in 1592, a few years before the writing of the present play, she was entertained on the 24th and 26th of September, with the representation of the last-mentioned play, and another Latin comedy, called *Bellum Grammaticale*.

MALONE.

⁹ *I did enact Julius Cæsar:*] A Latin play on the subject of Cæsar's death was performed at Christ-Church in Oxford, in 1582; and several years before, a Latin play on the same subject, written by Jacques Grevin, was acted in the college of Beauvais, at Paris. I suspect that there was likewise an English play on the story of

HAM. It was a brute part of him,¹ to kill so capital a calf there.—Be the players ready?

ROS. Ay, my lord; they stay upon your patience.⁴

QUEEN. Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

HAM. No, good mother, here's metal more attractive.

POL. O ho! do you mark that? [*To the King.*]

HAM. Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

[*Lying down at OPHELIA's feet.*⁵]

Cæsar before the time of Shakspeare. See Vol. XII. p. 238, and the *Essay on the Order of Shakspeare's Plays*, Vol. I.

MALONE.

¹ — *I was kill'd i'the Capitol;*] This, it is well known, was not the case; for Cæsar, we are expressly told by Plutarch, was killed in *Pompey's portico*. But our poet followed the received opinion, and probably the representation of his own time, in a play on the subject of Cæsar's death, previous to that which he wrote. The notion that Julius Cæsar was killed in the Capitol is as old as the time of Chaucer:

“ This Julius to the *capitolie* wente

“ Upon a day, as he was wont to gon,

“ And in the *capitolie* anon him hente

“ This false Brutus, and his other soon,

“ And sticket him with bodekins anon

• “ With many a wound,” &c. *The Monkes Tale.*

Tyrwhitt's edit. Vol. II. p. 31. MALONE.

³ *It was a brute part of him,*] Sir John Harrington in his *Metamorphosis of Ajax*, 1596, has the same quibble: “ O brave-minded Brutus! but this I must truly say, they were two *brutish parts* both of him and you; one to kill his sons for treason, the other to kill his father in treason.” STEEVENS.

⁴ — *they stay upon your patience.*] May it not be read more intelligibly,—*they stay upon your pleasure.* In *Macbeth* it is:

“ Noble Macbeth, we stay upon your *leisure.*”

JOHNSON.

⁵ — *at Ophelia's feet.*] To lie at the feet of a mistress during any dramatick representation, seems to have been a common act

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OPH. No, my lord.

HAM. I mean, my head upon your lap?⁶

OPH. Ay, my lord.

HAM. Do you think, I meant country matters?⁷

OPH. I think nothing, my lord.

HAM. That's a fair thought to lie between maids' legs.

OPH. What is, my lord?

HAM. Nothing.

OPH. You are merry, my lord.

HAM. Who, I?

OPH. Ay, my lord.

HAM. O! your only jig-maker.⁸ What should a

of gallantry. So, in *The Queen of Corinth*, by Beaumont and Fletcher:

"Ushers her to her coach, lies at her feet

"At solemn masques, applauding what she laughs at."

Again, in Gascoigne's *Greene Knight's farewell to Fancie*:

"To lie along in ladies lappes," &c. STEEVENS.

⁶ *I mean, &c.*] This speech and Ophelia's reply to it are omitted in the quartos. STEEVENS.

⁷ *Do you think, I meant country matters?*] Dr. Johnson, from a casual inadvertence, proposed to read—country *manners*. The old reading is certainly right. What Shakspeare meant to allude to, must be too obvious to every reader, to require any explanation.

MALONE.

⁸ ——— *your only jig-maker.*] There may have been some humour in this passage, the force of which is now diminished:

"———— many gentlemen

"Are not, as in the days of understanding,

"Now satisfied without a jig, which since

"They cannot, with their honour, call for after

"The play, they look to be serv'd up in the middle."

Changes, or Love in a Maze, by Shirley, 1632.

In *The Hog bath lost his Pearl*, 1614, one of the players comes to solicit a gentleman to write a jig for him. A jig was not in

man do, but be merry? for, look you, how cheerfully my mother looks, and my father died within these two hours.

OPH. Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord.

HAM. So long? Nay, then let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of fables.⁹ O heavens!

Shakspeare's time only a dance, but a ludicrous dialogue in metre, and of the lowest kind, like Hamlet's conversation with Ophelia. Many of these jiggs are entered in the books of the Stationers' Company:—"Philips his *Jigg* of the flyppers, 1595. Kempe's *Jigg* of the Kitchen-stuff-woman, 1595." STEEVENS.

The following lines in the prologue to Fletcher's *Love's Pilgrimage*, confirm Mr. Steevens's remark:

" ——— for approbation,

" A jig shall be clap'd at, and every rhyme

" Prais'd and applauded by a clamorous chime."

A jig was not always in the form of a dialogue. Many historical ballads were formerly called *jigs*. See also p. 143, n. 6, and *The Historical Account of the English Theatres*, Vol. II. MALONE.

A jig, though it signified a ludicrous dialogue in metre, yet it also was used for a dance. In the extract from Stephen Gosson in the next page but one, we have,

" ——— tumbling, dancing of giges." RITSON.

⁹ ——— *Nay, then let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of fables.*] The conceit of these words is not taken. They are an ironical apology for his mother's cheerful looks: two months was long enough in conscience to make any dead husband forgotten. But the editors, in their nonsensical blunder, have made Hamlet say just the contrary. That the devil and he would both go into mourning, though his mother did not. The true reading is—*Nay, then let the devil wear black, 'fore I'll have a suit of fable.* 'Fore, i. e. before. As much as to say,—Let the devil wear black for me, I'll have none. The Oxford editor despises an emendation so easy, and reads it thus,—*Nay, then let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of ermine.* And you could expect no less, when such a critick had the dressing of him. But the blunder was a pleasant one. The senseless editors had wrote *fables*, the fur so called, for *fable*, black. And the critick only changed this fur for that; by a like figure, the common people say,—*You rejoice the cockles of my heart, for the muscles of my heart*; an unlucky mistake of one shell-fish for another. WARBURTON.

I know not why our editors should with such implacable anger

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die two months ago, and not forgotten yet? Then there's hope, a great man's memory may outlive

persecute their predecessors. *Oi vapori non ducuntur*, the dead, it is true, can make no resistance, they may be attacked with great security; but since they can neither feel nor mend, the safety of manning them seems greater than the pleasure; nor perhaps would it much misbecome us to remember, amidst our triumphs over the *nonsensical* and *senseless*, that we likewise are men; that *debemur morti*, and as Swift observed to Burnet, shall soon be among the dead ourselves.

I cannot find how the common reading is nonsense, nor why Hamlet, when he laid aside his dress of mourning, in a country where it was *bitter cold*, and the air was *nipping and eager*, should not have a *suit of fables*. I suppose it is well enough known, that the fur of fables is not black. JOHNSON.

A *suit of fables* was the richest dress that could be worn in Denmark. STEEVENS.

Here again is an equivocal. In *Massinger's Old Law*, we have,

“ — A cunning grief,
“ That's only faced with *fables* for a show,
“ But gawdy-hearted. FARMER.

— *Nay, then let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of fables.*] Nay then, says Hamlet, if my father be so long dead as you say, let the devil wear black; as for me, so far from wearing a mourning dress, I'll wear the most costly and magnificent suit that can be procured; *a suit trimmed with fables*.

Our poet furnished Hamlet with a suit of fables on the present occasion, not, as I conceive, because such a dress was suited to “a country where it was bitter cold, and the air was nipping and eager,” (as Dr. Johnson supposed,) nor because “a suit of fables was the richest dress that could be worn in Denmark,” (as Mr. Steevens has suggested,) of which probably he had no knowledge, but because a suit trimmed with fables was in Shakspeare's time the richest dress worn by men in *England*. We have had again and again occasion to observe, that, wherever his scene might happen to be, the customs of his own country were still in his thoughts.

By the statute of apparel, 24 Henry VIII. c. 13, (article *furres*,) it is ordained, that none under the degree of an *earl* may use *fables*.

Bishop says in his *Blossoms*, 1577, speaking of the extravagance of those times, that a *thousand ducates* were sometimes given for “a face of fables.”

his life half a year: But, by'r-lady, he must build churches then:² or else shall he suffer not thinking on, with the hobby-horse;³ whose epitaph is, *For, O, for, O, the hobby-horse is forgot.*⁴

That *a suit of fables* was the magnificent dress of our author's time, appears from a passage in Ben Jonson's *Discoveries*: "Would you not laugh to meet a *great counsellor of state*, in a flat cap, with his trunk-hose, and a hobby-horse cloak, [See fig. 5. in the plate annexed to *King Henry IV.* P. I. Vol. VIII.] and yond haberdasher in a velvet gown trimm'd with *fables*?"

Florio in his *Italian Dictionary*, 1598, thus explains *zibillini*: "The *rich furre* called *fables*."—*Sables* is the skin of the fable Martin. See Cotgrave's *French Dict.* 1611: "Sebilline. Martre Sebel. The fable Martin; the beast whose skinne we call *fables*."

MALONE.

² — *but he must build churches then:*] Such benefactors to society were sure to be recorded by means of the feast-day on which the patron saints and founders of churches were commemorated in every parish. This custom having been long disused, the names of the builders of sacred edifices are no longer known to the vulgar, and are preserved only in antiquarian memoirs. STEEVENS.

³ — *suffer not thinking on, with the hobby-horse;*] Amongst the country May-games there was an hobby-horse, which, when the puritanical humour of those times opposed and discredited these games, was brought by the poets and ballad-makers as an instance of the ridiculous zeal of the sectaries: from these ballads Hamlet quotes a line or two. WARBURTON.

⁴ — *O, the hobby-horse is forgot.*] In *Love's Labour's Lost*, this line is also introduced. In a small black letter book, entitled, *Plays Confuted*, by Stephen Gosson, I find the *hobby-horse* enumerated in the list of dances: "For the devil (says this author) bestride the beautie of the houses, and the stages, sendeth in gearish apparell, maskes, vaulting, tumbling, dauncing of gigges, galiardes, morisces, *bobbi-horses*," &c. and in Green's *Tu Quoque*, 1614, the same expression occurs: "The other *hobby-horse* I perceive is not forgotten."

In *TEXNOGAMIA*, or *The Marriage of the Arts*, 1618, is the following stage-direction:

"Enter a hobby-horse, dancing the morrice," &c.

Again, in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Women Pleased*:

"Soto. Shall the *hobby-horse* be forgot then,

"The hopeful *hobby-horse*, shall he lie founder'd?"

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Trumpets sound. The dumb show follows.

Enter a king and a queen, very lovingly; the queen embracing him, and he her. She kneels, and makes show of protestation unto him. He takes her up, and declines his head upon her neck: lays him down upon a bank of flowers; she, seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon, comes in a fellow, takes off his crown, kisses it, and pours poison in the king's ears, and exit. The queen returns; finds the king dead, and makes passionate action. The poisoner, with some two or three mutes, comes in again, seeming to lament with her. The dead body is carried away. The poisoner wooes the queen with gifts; she seems loath and unwilling awhile, but in the end, accepts his love. [Exeunt.

OPH. What means this, my lord?

HAM. Marry, this is miching mallecho; it means mischief.⁵

The scene in which this passage is, will very amply confirm all that Dr. Warburton has said concerning the *bobby-horse*.

Again, in Ben Jonson's *Entertainment for the Queen and Prince at Aliborpe*:

- " But see the bobby-horse is forgot,
- " Fool, it must be your lot,
- " To supply his want with faces
- " And some other buffoon graces."

See figure 5, in the plate at the end of the First Part of *King Henry IV.* with Mr. Tollet's observations on it. STEEVENS.

⁵ *Marry, this is miching mallecho; it means mischief.*] To *mich* signified, originally, to keep hid and out of fight; and, as such men generally did it for the purposes of *lying in wait*, it then signified to rob. And in this sense Shakspeare uses the noun, a *micher*, when speaking of Prince Henry amongst a gang of robbers. *Shall the blessed sun of heaven prove a micher? Shall the son of England prove a thief?* And in this sense it is used by Chaucer, in his translation of *Le Roman de la Rose*, where he turns the word *liere*, (which is *larron, voleur*,) by *micher*. WARBURTON.

OPH. Belike, this show imports the argument of the play.

Enter Prologue.

HAM. We shall know by this fellow : the players cannot keep counsel ; they'll tell all.

OPH. Will he tell us what this show meant ?

Dr. Warburton is right in his explanation of the word *micbing*. So, in *The Raging Turk*, 1631 :

" — wilt thou, envious dotard,

" Strangle my greatness in a *micbing* hole ?"

Again, in Stanyhurst's *Virgil*, 1582 :

" — wherefore thus vainely in land Lybye *mitche* you ?"

The quarto reads—*munching* Mallico. STEEVENS.

The word *micbing* is daily used in the West of England for *playing truant*, or sculking about in private for *some sinister purpose*; and *malicbo*, inaccurately written for *malbeco*, signifies *mischief*; so that *micbing malicbo* is *mischief on the watch for opportunity*. When Ophelia asks Hamlet—"What means this?" she applies to him for an explanation of *what she had not seen in the show*; and not, as Dr. Warburton would have it, *the purpose for which the show was contrived*. Besides, *malbecor* no more signifies a *poisoner*, than a perpetrator of *any other crime*. HENLEY.

— *micbing mallecho*;] A secret and wicked contrivance; a concealed wickedness. To *micb* is a provincial word, and was probably once general, signifying to lie hid, or play the truant. In Norfolk *micbers* signify *pilferers*. The signification of *micbing* in the present passage may be ascertained by a passage in Decker's *Wonderful Yeare*, 4to. 1603: "Those that could shift for a time,—went most bitterly *micbing* and muffled, up and downe, with rue and wormwood stuf into their ears and nostrills."

See also Florio's Italian Dictionary, 1598, in v. *Accipinare*. "To *miche*, to thrug or *sneak* in some corner, and with powting and lips to shew some anger." In a subsequent passage we find that the murderer before he poisons the king makes *damnable faces*.

Where our poet met with the word *mallecho*, which in Minshew's Spanish Dictionary, 1617, is defined *malefactum*, I am unable to ascertain. In the folio, the word is spelt *malicbo*. *Mallico* [in the quarto] is printed in a distinct character, as a proper name.

MALONE—

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HAM. Ay, or any show that you'll show him:
Be not you ashamed to show,⁶ he'll not shame to
tell you what it means.

OPH. You are naught, you are naught; I'll mark
the play.

PRO. *For us, and for our tragedy,
Here stooping to your clemency,
We beg your bearing patiently.*

HAM. Is this a prologue, or the posy of a ring?

OPH. 'Tis brief, my lord.

HAM. As woman's love.

Enter a King and a Queen.

P. KING. Full thirty times hath Phœbus' cart⁷
gone round

Neptune's salt wash, and Tellus' orb'd ground;⁸
And thirty dozen moons, with borrow'd sheen,⁹
About the world have times twelve thirties been;
Since love our hearts, and Hymen did our hands,
Unite commutual in most sacred bands.

⁶ — *Be not you ashamed to show, &c.*] The conversation of Hamlet with Ophelia, which cannot fail to disgust every modern reader, is probably such as was peculiar to the young and fashionable of the age of Shakspeare, which was, by no means, an age of delicacy. The poet is, however, blameable; for extravagance of thought, not indecency of expression, is the characteristic of madness, at least of such madness as should be represented on the scene. STEEVENS.

⁷ — *cart*—] A chariot was anciently so called. Thus, Chaucer, in *The Knight's Tale*, Mr. Tyrwhitt's edit. ver. 2024:

“The carter overriden with his cart.” STEEVENS.

⁸ — *orb'd ground*;) So, also in our author's *Lover's Complaint*:

“Sometimes diverted, their poor balls are tied

“To the orb'd earth.” STEEVENS.

⁹ — *been*,] Splendor, lustre. JOHNSON.

P. QUEEN. So many journeys may the sun and
moon

Make us again count o'er, ere love be done !
But, woe is me, you are so sick of late,
So far from cheer, and from your former state,
That I distrust you. Yet, though I distrust,
Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must :
For women fear too much, even as they love ;²

² — *even as they love ;*] Here seems to have been a line lost, which should have rhymed to *love*. JOHNSON.

This line is omitted in the folio. Perhaps a triplet was designed, and then instead of *love*, we should read *lust*. The folio gives the next line thus :

“ For women’s fear and love holds quantity.”

STEEVENS.

There is, I believe, no instance of a triplet being used in our author’s time. Some trace of the lost line is found in the quarto, which read :

Either none in neither aught, &c.

Perhaps the words omitted might have been of this import :

Either none they feel, or an excess approve ;

In neither aught, or in extremity.

In two preceding passages in the quarto, half a line was inadvertently omitted by the compositor. See p. 142, “ *then senseless Ilium, seeming,*” &c. and p. 163, “ *thus conscience does make cowards of us all :*” — the words in Italick characters are not found in the quarto. MALONE.

Every critick, before he controverts the assertions of his predecessor, ought to adopt the resolution of Othello :

“ I’ll see, before I doubt ; what I doubt, prove.”

In Phaer and Twine’s *Virgil*, 1584, the triplets are so frequent, that in two opposite pages of the tenth book, not less than *seven* are to be met with. They are likewise as unsparingly employed in Golding’s *Ovid*, 1587. Mr. Malone, in a note on *The Tempest*, Vol. III. p. 140, has quoted a passage from this very work, containing one instance of them. In Chapman’s *Homer* they are also used, &c. &c. &c. In *The Tempest*, Act IV. sc. i. Many other examples of them occur in *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, Act III. sc. i. as well as in the *Comedy of Errors*, Act II. and III. &c. &c. — and, yet more unluckily for my opponent, the Prologue to the Mock Tragedy, now under consideration, consists of a triplet, which im-

And women's fear and love hold quantity ;
In neither aught, or in extremity.
Now, what my love is, proof hath made you know ;
And as my love is siz'd, my fear is so.³
Where love is great,⁴ the littlest doubts are fear ;
Where little fears grow great, great love grows there.

P. KING, 'Faith, I must leave thee, love, and
shortly too ;

My operant powers⁵ their functions leave to do :
And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,
Honour'd, belov'd ; and, haply, one as kind
For husband shalt thou——

P. QUEEN. O, confound the rest !
Such love must needs be treason in my breast :
In second husband let me be accurst !
None wed the second, but who kill'd the first.

HAM. That's wormwood.

P. QUEEN. The instances,⁶ that second marriage
move,
Are base respects of thrift, but none of love ;

our last edition stood at the top of the same page in which he
supposed " no instance of a triplet being used in our author's time."

STEEVENS.

³ And as my love is siz'd, my fear is so.] Cleopatra expresses
herself much in the same manner, with regard to her grief for the
loss of Antony :

" ——our fixe of sorrow,

" Proportion'd to our cause, must be as great

" As that which makes it." THEOBALD.

⁴ Where love &c.] These two lines are omitted in the folio.

STEEVENS.

⁵ ——operant powers——] Operant is active. Shakspeare gives
it in *Timon of Athens* as an epithet to *poison*. Heywood has likewise
used it in his *Royal King and Loyal Subject*, 1637 :

" ——may my operant parts

" Each one forget their office!"

The word is now obsolete. STEEVENS.

⁶ The instances,] The *motives*. JOHNSON.

A second time I kill my husband dead,
When second husband kisses me in bed.

P. KING. I do believe, you think what now you
speak ;

But, what we do determine, oft we break.
Purpose is but the slave to memory ;
Of violent birth, but poor validity :
Which now, like fruit unripe, sticks on the tree ;
But fall, unshaken, when they mellow be.
Most necessary 'tis, that we forget
To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt :⁷
What to ourselves in passion we propose,
The passion ending, doth the purpose lose.
The violence of either grief or joy
Their own enactures with themselves destroy :⁸
Where joy most revels, grief doth most lament ;
Grief joys, joy grieves, on slender accident.
This world is not for aye ; nor 'tis not strange,
That even our loves should with our fortunes
change ;
For 'tis a question left us yet to prove,
Whether love lead fortune, or else fortune love.
The great man down, you mark, his favourite flies ;
The poor advanc'd makes friends of enemies.
And hitherto doth love on fortune tend :
For who not needs, shall never lack a friend ;
And who in want a hollow friend doth try,
Directly seasons him his enemy.

⁷ — *what to ourselves is debt :*] The performance of a resolution, in which only the *resolver* is interested, is a debt only to himself, which he may therefore remit at pleasure. JOHNSON.

⁸ *The violence of either grief or joy
Their own enactures with themselves destroy :*] What grief or joy *enact* or determine in their violence, is revoked in their abatement. *Enactures* is the word in the quarto ; all the modern editions have *enactors*. JOHNSON.

But, orderly to end where I begun,—
 Our wills, and fates, do so contráry run,
 That our devices still are overthrown;
 Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own:
 So think thou wilt no second husband wed;
 But die thy thoughts, when thy first lord is dead.

P. QUEEN. Nor earth to me give food,⁹ nor heaven light!
 Sport and repose lock from me, day, and night!
 To desperation² turn my trust and hope!
 An anchor's cheer in prison be my scope!³

⁹ *Nor earth to me give food,*] Thus the quarto, 1604. The folio and the late editors read:

Nor earth to give me food,——.

An imperative or optative verb was evidently intended here, as in the following line:

"Sport and repose lock from me," &c. MALONE.

A very familiar imprecation,—

"Day, yield me not thy light; nor night, thy rest!" &c. occurs in *King Richard III.* See Vol. X. p. 650. STEEVENS.

² *To desperation* &c.] This and the following line are omitted in the folio. STEEVENS.

³ *An anchor's cheer in prison be my scope!*] May my whole liberty and enjoyment be to live on hermit's fare in a prison. *Anchor* is for *anchoret*. JOHNSON.

This abbreviation of the word *anchoret* is very ancient. I find it in the Romance of *Robert the Devil*, printed by Wynkyn de Worde: "We haue robbed and killed nonnes, holy *aukers*, preestes, clerkes," &c. Again, "the foxe will be an *auker*, for he begynneth to preche."

Again, in *The Vision of Pierce Plowman*:

"As *aukers* and hermits that hold them in her felles."

This and the foregoing line are not in the folio. I believe we should read—*anchor's chair*. So, in the second Satire of Hall's fourth book, edit. 1602, p. 18:

"Sit seven yerres pining in an *anchore's cheyre*,
 "To win some parched shreds of minivere."

STEEVENS.

The old copies read—*And anchor's cheer*. The correction was made by Mr. Theobald. MALONE.

Each opposite, that blanks the face of joy,
Meet what I would have well, and it destroy!
Both here, and hence, pursue me lasting strife,
If, once a widow, ever I be wife!

HAM. If she should break it now,——

[To OPHELIA.

P. KING. 'Tis deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me
here a while;

My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile
The tedious day with sleep. [Sleeps.

P. QUEEN. Sleep rock thy brain;
And never come mischance between us twain!

[Exit.

HAM. Madam, how like you this play?

QUEEN. The lady doth protest too much, me-
thinks.

HAM. O, but she'll keep her word.

KING. Have you heard the argument? Is there
no offence i't?

HAM. No, no, they do but jest, poison in jest;
no offence i'the world.

KING. What do you call the play?

HAM. The mouse-trap.⁴ Marry, how? Tropi-
cally. This play is the image of a murder done in
Vienna: Gonzago is the duke's name;⁵ his wife,

⁴ *The mouse-trap.*] He calls it the *mouse-trap*, because it is

“ ——— the thing

“ In which he'll *catch* the conscience of the king.”

STEEVENS.

⁵ ——— *Gonzago is the duke's name;*] Thus all the old copies:
yet in the stage-direction for the dumb show, and the subsequent
entrance, we have “*Enter a king and queen,*” &c. and in the
latter part of this speech both the quarto and folio read,

“ ——— *Lucianus, nephew to the king.*”

This seeming inconsistency however may be reconciled. Though

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Baptista:⁶ you shall see anon; 'tis a knavish piece of work: But what of that? your majesty, and we that have free souls, it touches us not: Let the gall'd jade wince,⁷ our withers are unwrung.—

Enter LUCIANUS.

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the king.⁸

OPH. You are as good as a chorus, my lord.⁹

HAM. I could interpret between you and your love, if I could see the puppets dallying.¹

the interlude is the *image* of the murder of a *duke* of Vienna, or in other words founded upon that story, the poet might make the principal person of *his fable* a king. MALONE.

⁶ — *Baptista*:] *Baptista* is, I think, in Italian, the name always of a man. JOHNSON.

I believe *Battista* is never used singly by the Italians, being uniformly compounded with *Giam* (for *Giovanni*), and meaning, of course, *John the Baptist*. Nothing more was therefore necessary to detect the forgery of Shebbeare's *Letters on the English Nation*, than his ascribing them to *Battista Angeloni*. RITSON.

⁷ *Let the gall'd jade wince,*] This is a proverbial saying. So, in *Damon and Pythias*, 1582:

"I know the gall'd horse will soonest wince." STEEVENS.

⁸ — *nephew to the king*.] i. e. to the king in the play then represented. The modern editors, following Mr. Theobald, read—*nephew to the duke*,—though they have not followed that editor in substituting *duke and dutchess*, for *king and queen*, in the dumb show and subsequent entrance. There is no need of departing from the old copies. See n. 5. MALONE.

⁹ *You are as good as a chorus, &c.*] The use to which Shakespeare converted the chorus, may be seen in *King Henry V*.

HENLEY.

¹ Ham. *I could interpret &c.*] This refers to the interpreter, who formerly sat on the stage at all motions or puppet-shows, and interpreted to the audience.

So, in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*:

"O excellent motion! O exceeding puppet!"

"Now will he interpret for her."

Again, in Greene's *Groat-worth of Wit*, 1621: "—It was I

OPH. You are keen, my lord, you are keen.

HAM. It would cost you a groaning, to take off my edge.

OPH. Still better, and worse.*

HAM. So you mistake your husbands.³—Begin, murderer;—leave thy damnable faces, and begin.

that penn'd the moral of Man's wit, the dialogue of Dives, and for seven years' space was absolute interpreter of the puppets." STEEVENS.

* *Still better, and worse.*] i. e. better in regard to the wit of your double entendre, but worse in respect to the grossness of your meaning. STEEVENS.

³ *So you mistake your husbands.*] Read—*So you must take your husbands*; that is, *for better, for worse.* JOHNSON.

Mr. Theobald proposed the same reading in his *Shakspeare Restored*, however he lost it afterwards. STEEVENS.

So you mistake your husbands.] I believe this to be right: the word is sometimes used in this ludicrous manner. "Your true trick, rascal, (says Ursula in *Baribolomeu Fair*,) must be to be ever busie, and mistake away the bottles and cans, before they be half drunk off." FARMER.

Again, in Ben Jonson's *Masque of Augurs*: "——To mistake six torches from the chandry, and give them one."

Again, in *The Elder Brother* of Fletcher:

"I fear he will persuade me to mistake him."

Again, in *Chrestoleros*; *Seven bookes of Epigrams written by T. B.* [Thomas Bastard] 1598. Lib. VII. Epig. xviii:

"Caius hath brought from forraine landes

"A sootie wench, with many handes,

"Which doe in goolden letters say

"She is his wife, not stolne away.

"He mought have sav'de, with small discretion,

"Paper, inke, and all confession:

"For none that see'th her face and making,

"Will judge her stolne, but by mistaking."

Again, in *Questions of Profitable and Pleasant Concernings*, &c. 1594: "Better I were now and then to suffer his remisse mother to mistake a quarter or two of corne, to buy the knave a coat with," &c.

STEEVENS.

I believe the meaning is—you do amiss for yourselves to take husbands for the worse. You should take them only for the better.

TOLLET.

Come:—

— The croaking raven
Doth bellow for revenge.

LUC. Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and
time agreeing;
Confederate season, else no creature feeling;
Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds⁴ collected,
With Hecat's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected,
Thy natural magick and dire property,
On wholesome life usurp immediately.

[*Pours the poison into the sleeper's ears.*]

HAM. He poisons him i' the garden for his estate.
His name's Gonzago: the story is extant, and writ-
ten in very choice Italian: You shall see anon, how
the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife.

OPH. The king rises.

HAM. What! frightened with false fire!⁵

QUEEN. How fares my lord?

POL. Give o'er the play.

KING. Give me some light:—away!

POL. Lights, lights, lights!⁶

[*Exeunt all but HAMLET and HORATIO.*]

HAM. Why, let the stricken deer go weep,⁷

The hart ungalled play:

For some must watch, while some must sleep;

Thus runs the world away.—

⁴ — midnight weeds—] The force of the epithet—*midnight*, will be best displayed by a corresponding passage in *Macbeth*:

“Root of hemlock, digg'd i' the dark.” STEEVENS.

⁵ *What! frightened with false fire!*] This speech is omitted in the quartos. STEEVENS.

⁶ *Lights, lights, lights!*] The quartos give this speech to *Polonius*. STEEVENS.

In the folio *All* is prefixed to this speech. MALONE.

⁷ — *stricken deer go weep,*] See Vol. VI. p. 40, n. 6. STEEVENS.

Would not this, fir, and a forest of feathers,⁸ (if the rest of my fortunes turn Turk with me,⁹) with two Provencial roses on my razed shoes,² get me a fellowship in a cry of players,³ fir?

⁸ *Would not this, fir, and a forest of feathers, &c.*] It appears from Decker's *Gulls Hornebooke*, that feathers were much worn on the stage in Shakspeare's time. MALONE.

I believe, since the English stage began, feathers were worn by every company of players that could afford to purchase them.

STEEVENS.

⁹ — turn Turk *with me*,] This expression has occurred already in *Much Ado about Nothing*, and I have met with it in several old comedies. So, in Greene's *Tu Quoque*, 1614: "This it is to *turn Turk*, from an absolute and most compleat gentleman, to a most absurd, ridiculous, and fond lover." It means, I believe, no more than to change condition fantastically. Again, in Decker's *Honest Whore*, 1635:

" — tis damnation,

" If you *turn Turk* again."

Perhaps the phrase had its rise from some popular story like that of *Ward* and *Danfiker*, the two famous pirates; an account of whose overthrow was published by A. Barker, 1609; and, in 1612, a play was written on the same subject called *A Christian turn'd Turk*. STEEVENS.

² — Provencial roses on my razed shoes,] [Old copies—*provincial*.] Why *provincial* roses? Undoubtedly we should read *Provencial*, or (with the French *ç*) *Provençal*. He means roses of *Provence*, a beautiful species of rose, and formerly much cultivated.

T. WARTON.

They are still more cultivated than any other flower of the same tribe. STEEVENS.

When shoe-strings were worn, they were covered, where they met in the middle, by a ribband, gathered in the form of a rose. So, in an old song:

" Gil-de-Roy was a bonny boy,

" Had *roses* tull his *shoon*." JOHNSON.

These *roses* are often mentioned by our ancient dramattick writers.

So, in *The Devil's Lane-case*, 1623:

" With over blown *roses* to hide your gouty ancles."

Again, in *The Roaring Girl*, 1611: " — many handsome

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HOR. Half a share.

legs in silk stockings have villainous splay-feet, for all their great *rofes*,"

The reading of the quartos is *raz'd shoes*; that of the folio *rac'd shoes*. *Razed shoes*, may mean *flashed shoes*, i. e. with cuts or openings in them. The poet might have written *raised shoes*, i. e. shoes with *high heels*; such as by adding to the stature, are supposed to increase the dignity of a player. In Stubbs's *Anatomie of Abuses*, 1595, there is a chapter on the *corked shoes* in England, "which (he says) beare them up two inches or more from the ground, &c. some of red, blacke, &c. *razed*, carved, cut, and stitched," &c.

Again, in Warner's *Albion's England*, 1602, B. IX. ch. xlvii:

"Then wore they shoes of ease, now of an inch-broad,
corked high."

Mr. Pope reads—*rayed shoes*, i. e. (as interpreted by Dr. Johnson) "*shoes braided in lines*." Stowe's *Chronicle*, anno 1353, mentions women's hoods *reyed* or striped. *Raie* is the French word for a stripe. Johnson's *Collection of Ecclesiastical Laws* informs us, under the years 1222 and 1353, that in disobedience of the canon, the clergy's shoes were *chequered* with red and green, exceeding long, and variously pinked.

The reading of the quartos may likewise receive additional support. *Balwer*, in his *Artificial Changeling*, speaks of gallants who *pink* and *raze* their fatten, damask, and Duretto skins. To *raze* and to *raze*, alike signify to *break*. See Minshew's *Dict.* in v. To *rase*. The word, though differently spelt, is used in nearly the same signification in Markham's *Country Farm*, p. 585: "—baking all (i. e. wafer cakes; together between two irons, having within them many *razed* and checkered draughts after the manner of small squares." STEEVENS.

¹ — a cry of *players*,] Allusion to a pack of hounds.

WARBURTON.

A pack of hounds was once called a *cry* of hounds. So, in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, by Beaumont and Fletcher:

"—and well have halloo'd

"To a deep cry of hounds."

Again, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*:

"—a cry more tuneable

"Was never halloed to, or cheer'd with horn."

Milton, likewise, has—"A cry of hell-hounds." STEEVENS.

—a cry of *players*,] A troop or company of players. So, in *Coriolanus*:

"—You have made good work,

"You and your cry."

HAM. A whole one, I.⁴

For thou dost know, O Damon dear,⁵

This realm dismantled was

Of Jove himself; and now reigns here

A very, very—peacock.⁶

Again, in *A strange Horse-race*, by Thomas Decker, 1613:
“The last race they ran, (for you must know they ran many,) was
from a cry of serjeants.” MALONE.

⁴ Hor. *Half a share*.

Ham. *A whole one*, I.] It should be, I think,

A whole one;—ay,—

For &c.

The actors in our author's time had not annual salaries as at present. The whole receipts of each theatre were divided into shares, of which the proprietors of the theatre, or *house-keepers* as they were called, had some; and each actor had one or more shares, or part of a share, according to his merit. See *The Account of the Ancient Theatres*, Vol. II. MALONE.

A whole one, I, in familiar language, means no more than—I think myself entitled to a whole one. STEEVENS.

⁵ — O Damon dear,] Hamlet calls Horatio by this name, in allusion to the celebrated friendship between *Damon* and *Pythias*. A play on this subject was written by Richard Edwards, and published in 1582. STEEVENS.

The friendship of Damon and Pythias is also enlarged upon in a book that was probably very popular in Shakspeare's youth, Sir Thomas Elliot's *Governour*, 1553. MALONE.

⁶ *A very, very—peacock*.] This alludes to a fable of the birds choosing a king; instead of the eagle, a peacock. POPE.

The old copies have it *paiock*, *paicocke*, and *pajocke*. I substitute *paddock*, as nearest to the traces of the corrupted reading. I have, as Mr. Pope says, been willing to substitute any thing in the place of his *peacock*. He thinks a fable alluded to, of the birds choosing a king; instead of the eagle, a peacock. I suppose, he must mean the fable of Barlandus, in which it is said, the birds, being weary of their state of anarchy, moved for the setting up of a king; and the peacock was elected on account of his gay feathers. But, with submission, in this passage of our Shakspeare, there is not the least mention made of the eagle in antithesis to the peacock; and it must be by a very uncommon figure, that Jove himself stands in the place of his bird. I think, Hamlet is setting his father's and

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HOR. You might have rhymed.

HAM. O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word for a thousand pound. Didst perceive?

HOR. Very well, my lord.

HAM. Upon the talk of the poisoning,—

HOR. I did very well note him.

HAM. Ah, ha!—Come, some musick; come, the recorders.—

For if the king like not the comedy,

Why then, belike,¹—he likes it not, perdy.²—

uncle's characters in contrast to each other: and means to say, that by his father's death the state was stripp'd of a godlike monarch, and that now in his stead reign'd the most despicable poisonous animal that could be; a mere *paddock* or *toad*. *PAD*, *busa*, *rubeta major*; a toad. This word I take to be of Hamlet's own substituting. The verses, repeated, seem to be from some old ballad; in which, rhyme being necessary, I doubt not but the last verse ran thus:

A very, very—afs. THEOBALD,

A peacock seems proverbial for a fool. Thus, Gascoigne in his *Woods*:

"A theefe, a cowarde, and a *peacocke* foole."

FARMER.

In the last scene of this act, Hamlet, speaking of the King, uses the expression which Theobald would introduce:

"Would from a *paddock*, from a bat, a gib,

"Such dear concernments hide?"

The reading, *peacock*, which I believe to be the true one, was first introduced by Mr. Pope.

Mr. Theobald is unfaithful in his account of the old copies. No copy of authority reads—*paicocke*. The quarto, 1604, has *paick*; the folio, 1623, *paiocke*.

Shakspeare, I suppose, means, that the king struts about with a false pomp, to which he has no right. See Florio's Italian Dictionary, 1568: "*Parvonnegiare*. To jet up and down, fondly gazing upon himself, as a peacock doth." MALONE.

¹ *Why then, belike,*] Hamlet was going on to draw the consequence, when the courtiers entered. JOHNSON.

² — *be likes it not, perdy.*] *Perdy* is a corruption of *par Dieu*,

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Come, some mufick.

GUIL. Good my lord, vouchsafe me a word with you.

HAM. Sir, a whole history.

GUIL. The king, fir,—

HAM. Ay, fir, what of him?

GUIL. Is, in his retirement, marvellous distemper'd.

HAM. With drink, fir?⁹

GUIL. No, my lord, with choler.

HAM. Your wisdom should show itself more richer, to signify this to the doctor; for, for me to put him to his purgation, would, perhaps, plunge him into more choler.

GUIL. Good my lord, put your discourse into some frame, and start not so wildly from my affair.

HAM. I am tame, fir:—pronounce.

GUIL. The queen, your mother, in most great affliction of spirit, hath sent me to you.

HAM. You are welcome.

GUIL. Nay, good my lord, this courtesy is not of the right breed. If it shall please you to make me a wholesome answer, I will do your mother's commandment: if not, your pardon, and my return, shall be the end of my business.

and is not uncommon in the old plays. So, in *The Play of the Four P's*, 1569:

“ In that, you Palmer, as deputie,

“ May cleerly discharge him, *pardie*.” STEEVENS.

⁹ *With drink, fir?*] Hamlet takes particular care that his uncle's love of drink shall not be forgotten. JOHNSON.

HAM. Sir, I cannot.

GUIL. What, my lord?

HAM. Make you a wholesome answer; my wit's diseased: But, sir, such answer as I can make, you shall command; or, rather, as you say, my mother: therefore no more, but to the matter: My mother, you say,—

ROS. Then thus she says; Your behaviour hath struck her into amazement and admiration.

HAM. O wonderful son, that can so astonish a mother!—But is there no sequel at the heels of this mother's admiration? impart.

ROS. She desires to speak with you in her closet, ere you go to bed.

HAM. We shall obey, were she ten times our mother. Have you any further trade² with us?

ROS. My lord, you once did love me.

HAM. And do still, by these pickers and stealers.³

ROS. Good my lord, what is your cause of discontenter? you do, surely, bar the door upon your own liberty, if you deny your griefs to your friend.

HAM. Sir, I lack advancement.

ROS. How can that be, when you have the voice of the king himself for your succession in Denmark?⁴

² — *further trade*—] Further business; further dealing.

JOHNSON.

³ — *by these pickers &c.*] By these hands. JOHNSON.

By these hands, says Dr. Johnson; and rightly. But the phrase is taken from our church catechism, where the catechumen, in his duty to his neighbour, is taught to keep his hands from *picking and stealing*. WHALLEY.

⁴ — *when you have the voice of the king himself for your succession in Denmark?*] See p. 33, n. 6. MALONE.

The figure 6, introducing the note referred to, has accidentally

HAM. Ay, fir, but, *While the grafs grows*,—the proverb is something musty.⁵

*Enter the Players, with Recorders.*⁶

O, the recorders:—let me see one.—To withdraw with you:⁷—Why do you go about to recover the wind of me,⁸ as if you would drive me into a toil?

dropped out of it while the sheet was at press. The corresponding numeral, however, in the text remains as a guide to the reader.

STEEVENS.

⁵ *Ay, fir, but, While the grafs grows,—the proverb is something musty.*] The remainder of this old proverb is preserved in Whetstone's *Promos and Cassandra*, 1578:

“ Whylst grafs doth growe, oft starves the feely fledge.”

Again, in *The Paradise of Daintie Devises*, 1578:

“ To whom of old this proverbe well it serves,

“ *While grafs doth growe, the filly horse be starves.*”

Hamlet means to intimate, that whilst he is waiting for the succession to the throne of Denmark, he may himself be taken off by death. MALONE.

⁶ — *Recorders.*] i. e. a kind of large flute. See Vol. V. p. 149, n. 6.

To record anciently signified to sing or modulate. STEEVENS.

⁷ *To withdraw with you:*] These last words have no meaning, as they stand; yet none of the editors have attempted to amend them. They were probably spoken to the players, whom Hamlet wished to get rid of:—I therefore should suppose that we ought to read, “ so, withdraw you;” or, “ so withdraw, will you?”

M. MASON.

Here Mr. Malone adds the following stage direction:—[*Taking Guildenstern aside.*] But the foregoing obscure words may refer to some gesture which Guildenstern had used, and which, at first was interpreted by Hamlet into a signal for him to attend the speaker into another room. “ To withdraw with you?” (says he) is that your meaning? But finding his friends continue to move mysteriously about him, he adds, with some resentment, a question more easily intelligible. STEEVENS.

⁸ — *recover the wind of me,*] So, in an ancient MS. play entitled *The Second Maiden's Tragedy*:

“ ——— Is that next?”

“ Why, then I have your ladyship in the wind.”

STEEVENS.

PRINCE OF DENMARK. 205

GUIL. O, my lord, if my duty be too bold, my love is too unmannerly.⁹

HAM. I do not well understand that. Will you play upon this pipe?

GUIL. My lord, I cannot.

HAM. I pray you.

GUIL. Believe me, I cannot.

HAM. I do beseech you.

GUIL. I know no touch of it, my lord.

HAM. 'Tis as easy as lying: govern these ventages^a with your fingers and thumb,³ give it breath

Again, in Churchyard's *Worthiness of Wales*:

" Their cunning can with craft so cloke a troeth,

" That hardly we shall have them in the winde,

" To smell them forth or yet their fineness finde."

HENDERSON.

⁹ O, my lord, if my duty be too bold, my love is too unmannerly.] i. e. if my duty to the king makes me press you a little, my love to you makes me still more importunate. If that makes me bold, this makes me even unmannerly. **WARBURTON.**

I believe we should read—*my love is not unmannerly*. My conception of this passage is, that, in consequence of Hamlet's moving to take the recorder, Guildenstern also shifts his ground, in order to place himself beneath the prince in his new position. This Hamlet ludicrously calls "*going about to recover the wind*," &c. and Guildenstern may answer properly enough, I think, and like a courtier; "*if my duty to the king makes me too bold in pressing you upon a disagreeable subject, my love to you will make me not unmannerly*, in shewing you all possible marks of respect and attention." **TYRWHITT.**

^a —ventages—] The holes of a flute. **JOHNSON.**

³ —and thumb,] The first quarto reads—*with your fingers and the umber*. This may probably be the ancient name for that piece of moveable brass at the end of a flute which is either raised or depressed by the finger. The word *umber* is used by Stowe the chronicler, who, describing a single combat between two knights—says, "he brast up his umber three times." Here, the *umber*

with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent musick. Look you, these are the stops.⁴

GUIL. But these cannot I command to any utterance of harmony; I have not the skill.

HAM. Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me? You would play upon me; you would seem to know my stops; you would pluck out the heart of my mystery; you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass: and there is much musick, excellent voice, in this little organ; yet cannot you make it

means the visor of the helmet. So, in Spenser's *Fairy Queen*, Book III. c. i. st. 42:

"But the brave maid would not disarmed be,
"But only vented up her *ambriere*,
"And so did let her goodly visage to appere."

Again, Book IV. c. iv:

"And therewith smote him on his *ambriere*."

Again, in the second book of Lidgate on the Trojan War, 1513:

"Thorough the *umber* into Troylus' face." STEEVENS.

If a *recorder* had a brass key like the *German Flute*, we are to follow the reading of the quarto; for then the thumb is not concerned in the government of the ventages or stops. If a *recorder* was like a *tabourer's pipe*, which has no brass key, but has a stop for the thumb, we are to read—*Govern these ventages with your finger and thumb*. In Cotgrave's Dictionary, *ombre*, *ombraire*, *ombriere*, and *ombrelle*, are all from the Latin *umbra*, and signify a shadow, an umbrella, or any thing that shades or hides the face from the sun; and hence they may have been applied to any thing that hides or covers another; as for example, they may have been applied to the brass key that covers the hole in the German flute. So, Spenser used *ambriere* for the visor of the helmet, as Rous's *History of the Kings of England* uses *umbrella* in the same sense.

TOLLET.

⁴ —the stops.] The sounds formed by occasionally stopping the holes, while the instrument is played upon. So, in the Prologue to *King Henry V*:

"Rumour is a *pipe*—

"And of so easy and so plain a *stop*," &c. MALONE.

PRINCE OF DENMARK. 207

Speak. 'Sblood, do you think, I am easier to be play'd on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, you cannot play upon me.

Enter POLONIUS.

God blefs you, fir!

POL. My lord, the queen would ſpeak with you, and preſently.

HAM. Do you ſee yonder cloud, that's almoſt in ſhape of a camel?

POL. By the maſs, and 'tis like a camel, indeed.

HAM. Methinks, it is like a weaſel.^s

^s *Metbinks, &c.*] This paſſage has been printed in modern editions thus:

Ham. *Metbinks, it is like an ouzle, &c.*

Pol. *It is black like an ouzle.*

The firſt folio reads,—*It is like a weazel.*

Pol. *It is back'd like a weazel*—: and what occaſion for alteration there was, I cannot diſcover. The *weaſel* is remarkable for the length of its *back*; but though I believe a *black weaſel* is not eaſy to be found, yet it is as likely that the cloud ſhould reſemble a *weaſel* in ſhape, as an *ouze* (i. e. black-bird) in colour.

Mr. Tollet obſerves, that we might read—“ it is *beck'd* like a weaſel,” i. e. weaſel-snouted. So, in *Holinſhed's Deſcription of England*, p. 172: “ if he be *weſell-becked*.” Quarles uſes this term of reproach in his *Virgin Widow*: “ Go you *weazel-snouted, addle-pated*,” &c. Mr. Tollet adds, that Milton in his *Lycidas*, calls a promontory *beaked*, i. e. prominent like the *beak* of a bird, or a ſhip. STEEVENS.

Ham. *Metbinks it is like a weazel.*

Pol. *It is back'd like a weazel.*] Thus the quarto, 1604, and the folio. In a more modern quarto, that of 1611, *back'd* the original reading, was corrupted into *black*.

Perhaps in the original edition the words *camel* and *weazel* were ſhuffled out of their places. The poet might have intended the dialogue to proceed thus:

POL. It is back'd like a weasel.

HAM. Or, like a whale?

POL. Very like a whale.

HAM. Then will I come to my mother by and by.—They fool me to the top of my bent.⁵—I will come by and by.

POL. I will say so. [Exit POLONIUS.]

HAM. By and by is easily said.—Leave me, friends. [Exeunt ROS. GUIL. HOR. &c.]

'Tis now the very witching time of night;
When churchyards yawn, and hell itself breathes out
Contagion to this world: Now could I drink hot
blood,
And do such business as the bitter day⁶
Would quake to look on. Soft; now to my mother.—

“Ham. Do you see yonder cloud, that's almost in the shape of a weasel?

“Pol. By the mass, and 'tis like a weasel, indeed.

“Ham. Methinks, it is like a camel.

“Pol. It is back'd like a camel.

The protuberant back of a camel seems more to resemble a cloud, than the back of a weasel does. MALONE.

⁵ *They fool me to the top of my bent.*] They compel me to play the fool, till I can endure it no longer. JOHNSON.

Perhaps a term in archery; i. e. as far as the bow will admit of being bent without breaking. DOUCE.

⁶ *And do such business as the bitter day—*] Thus the quarto. The folio reads:

And do such bitter business as the day &c. MALONE.

The expression *bitter business* is still in use, and though at present a vulgar phrase, might not have been such in the age of Shakspeare. The *bitter day* is the day rendered hateful or *bitter* by the commission of some act of mischief.

Watts, in his *Logick*, says, “*Bitter* is an equivocal word; there is *bitter* wormwood, there are *bitter* words, there are *bitter* enemies, and a *bitter* cold morning.” It is, in short, any thing unpleasing or hurtful. STEEVENS.

O, heart, lose not thy nature; let not ever
 The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom:
 Let me be cruel, not unnatural:
 I will speak daggers to her,⁷ but use none;
 My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites:
 How in my words soever she be shent,⁸
 To give them seals⁹ never, my soul, consent!
[Exit.

SCENE III.

A Room in the same.

Enter King, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.

KING. I like him not; nor stands it safe with us,
 To let his madness range. Therefore, prepare you;
 I your commission will forthwith despatch,

⁷ *I will speak daggers to her,*] A similar expression occurs in *The Return from Parnassus*, 1606: "They are pestilent fellows, they speak nothing but *bodkins*." It has been already observed, that a *bodkin* anciently signified a *short dagger*. STEEVENS.

⁸ *— be shent,*] To *shent*, is to reprove harshly, to treat with rough language. So, in *The Coxcomb* of Beaumont and Fletcher:
 "— We shall be *shent* soundly." STEEVENS.

See Vol. XII. p. 212, n. 8. MALONE.

Shent seems to mean something more than reproof, by the following passage from *The Mirror for Magistrates*: Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, is the speaker, and he relates his having betrayed the Duke of Gloucester and his confederates to the King, "for which (says he) they were all tane and *shent*."

Hamlet surely means, "however my mother may be *hurt*, *wounded*, or *punish'd*, by my words, let me never consent" &c.

HENDERSON.

⁹ *To give them seals—*] i. e. put them in execution.

WARBURTON.

And he to England shall along with you :²
 The terms of our estate may not endure
 Hazard so near us, as doth hourly grow
 Out of his lunes.³

GUIL.

We will ourselves provide :

² *I like him not; nor stands it safe with us,
 To let his madness range. Therefore, prepare you;
 I your commission will forthwith despatch,
 And he to England shall along with you :]*

In *The History of Hamblett*, bl. l. the king does not adopt this scheme of sending Hamlet to England till after the death of Polonius; and though he is described as doubtful whether Polonius was slain by Hamlet, his apprehension lest he might himself meet the same fate as the old courtier, is assigned as the motive for his wishing the prince out of the kingdom. This at first inclined me to think that this short scene, either from the negligence of the copyist or the printer, might have been misplaced; but it is certainly printed as the author intended, for in the next scene Hamlet says to his mother, "I must to England; you know that?" before the king could have heard of the death of Polonius. MALONE.

³ *Out of his lunes.] [The folio reads—Out of his lunacies.]*
 The old quartos,
Out of his brows.

This was from the ignorance of the first editors; as is this unnecessary Alexandrine, which we owe to the players. The poet, I am persuaded, wrote,

— as doth hourly grow

Out of his lunes,

i. e. his *madness, frenzy.* THEOBALD.

I take *brows* to be, properly read, *frowns*, which, I think, is a provincial word for *perverse humours*; which being, I suppose, not understood, was changed to *lunacies*. But of this I am not confident. JOHNSON.

I would receive Theobald's emendation, because Shakspeare uses the word *lunes* in the same sense in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *The Winter's Tale*.

I have met, however, with an instance in support of Dr. Johnson's conjecture;

"— were you but as favourable as you are *frowisb* —."

Tully's Love, by Greene, 1616.

Perhaps, however, Shakspeare designed a metaphor from horned

Most holy and religious fear it is,
To keep those many many bodies safe,
That live, and feed, upon your majesty.

Ros. The single and peculiar life is bound,
With all the strength and armour of the mind,
To keep itself from 'noyance; but much more
That spirit, upon whose weal⁴ depend and rest
The lives of many. The cease of majesty

cattle, whose powers of being dangerous increase with the growth of their brows. STEEVENS.

The two readings of *brows* and *lunes*—when taken in connection with the passages referred to by Mr. Steevens, in *The Winter's Tale* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, plainly figure forth the image under which the King apprehended danger from Hamlet:—viz. that of a bull, which, in his frenzy, might not only gore, but push him from his throne.—“The hazard that hourly grows out of his BROWS” (according to the quartos) corresponds to “*the shoots from the ROUGH PASH,*” [that is *the TUFTED PROTUBERANCE on the head of a bull, from whence his horns spring*] alluded to in *The Winter's Tale*; whilst the imputation of impending danger to “*his LUNES*” (according to the other reading) answers as obviously to the jealous fury of the husband that thinks he has detected the infidelity of his wife. Thus, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*: “Why woman, your husband is in his old *lunes*—he so takes on yonder with my husband; so rails against all married mankind; so curses all Eve's daughters, and so buffets himself on the *forehead*, crying peer out! peer out! that any *madness*, I ever yet beheld, seem'd but tameness, civility, and patience, to this distemper he is now in.” HENLEY.

Shakspeare probably had here the following passage in *The History of Hamblett*, bl. l. in his thoughts: “*Fengon* could not content himself, but still his minde gave him that the *foole* [*Hamlet*] would play him *some trick of legerdemaine*. And in that conceit seeking to be rid of him, determined to find the meanes to do it, by the aid of a stranger; making the king of England minister of his massiacrous resolution, to whom he purposed to send him.”

MALONE.

⁴ *That spirit, upon whose weal—*] So, the quarto. The folio gives,

That spirit, upon whose spirit—. STEEVENS.

Dies not alone; but, like a gulf, doth draw
 What's near it, with it: it is a massy wheel,⁵
 Fix'd on the summit of the highest mount,
 To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things
 Are mortis'd and adjoin'd; which, when it falls,
 Each small annexment, petty consequence,
 Attends the boist'rous ruin. Never alone
 Did the king sigh, but with a general groan.

KING. Arm you, I pray you, to this speedy voy—
 age;
 For we will fetters put upon this fear,
 Which now goes too free-footed.

Ros. GUIL. We will haste us.
 [Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.]

Enter POLONIUS.

POL. My lord, he's going to his mother's closet;
 Behind the arras I'll convey myself,⁶
 To hear the process; I'll warrant, she'll tax him
 home:
 And, as you said, and wisely was it said,
 'Tis meet, that some more audience, than a mo-
 ther,
 Since nature makes them partial,⁷ should o'erhear

⁵ — it is a massy wheel,] Thus the folio. The quarto reads,
 — Or it is &c. MALONE.

⁶ Behind the arras I'll convey myself,] See Vol. VIII. p. 481,
 n. 9. STEEVENS.

The arras-hangings in Shakspeare's time, were hung at such a
 distance from the walls, that a person might easily stand behind
 them unperceived. MALONE.

⁷ Since nature makes them partial, &c.]

“ ——— Matres omnes filijs

“ In peccato adjutrices, auxilii in paterna injuria

“ Solent esse —.” Ter. Heaut. Act V. sc. ii.

STEEVENS.

PRINCE OF DENMARK. 213

The speech, of vantage.* Fare you well, my liege:
I'll call upon you ere you go to bed,
And tell you what I know.

KING.

Thanks, dear my lord.

[Exit POLONIUS.

O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven;
It hath the primal eldest curse upon't,
A brother's murder!—Pray can I not,
Though inclination be as sharp as will;⁹
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent;
And, like a man to double business bound,
I stand in pause where I shall first begin,
And both neglect. What if this cursed hand
Were thicker than itself with brother's blood?
Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens,
To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy,
But to confront the visage of offence?
And what's in prayer, but this two-fold force,—
To be forestalled, ere we come to fall,
Or pardon'd, being down? Then I'll look up;
My fault is past. But, O, what form of prayer
Can serve my turn? Forgive me my foul murder!—

* ——— of vantage.] By some opportunity of secret observation.

WARBURTON.

⁹ Though inclination be as sharp as will;] Dr. Warburton would read,

Though inclination be as sharp as th' ill.

The old reading is—as sharp as will. STEEVENS.

I have followed the easier emendation of Mr. Theobald, received by Sir T. Hanmer: i. e. as 'twill. JOHNSON.

Will is command, direction. Thus, Ecclesiasticus, xliii. 16: “—and at his will the south wind bloweth.” The King says, his mind is in too great confusion to pray, even though his inclination were as strong as the command which requires that duty. STEEVENS.

What the King means to say, is, “That though he was not only willing to pray, but strongly inclined to it, yet his intention was defeated by his guilt. M. MASON.

That cannot be; since I am still possess'd
 Of those effects for which I did the murder,
 My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen,
 May one be pardon'd, and retain the offence?²
 In the corrupted currents of this world,
 Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice;
 And oft 'tis seen, the wicked prize itself
 Buys out the law: But 'tis not so above:
 There is no shuffling, there the action lies
 In his true nature; and we ourselves compell'd,
 Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,
 To give in evidence. What then? what rests?
 Try what repentance can: What can it not?
 Yet what can it, when one can not repent?³
 O wretched state! O bosom, black as death!
 O limed soul;⁴ that, struggling to be free,
 Art more engag'd! Help, angels, make assay!
 Bow, stubborn knees! and, heart, with strings of
 steel,
 Be soft as sinews of the new-born babe;
 All may be well! [Retires, and kneels,

² *May one be pardon'd, and retain the offence?*] He that does not amend what can be amended, *retains* his offence. The King kept the crown from the right heir. JOHNSON.

A similar passage occurs in *Philaster*, where the King, who had usurped the crown of Sicily, and is praying to heaven for forgiveness, says,

" ——— But how can I

" Look to be heard of gods, that must be just,

" Praying upon the ground I hold by wrong."

M. MASON.

³ *Yet what can it, when one can not repent?*] *What can repentance do for a man that cannot be penitent, for a man who has only part of penitence, distress of conscience, without the other part, resolution of amendment?* JOHNSON.

⁴ *O limed soul;*] This alludes to *bird-lime*. Shakspeare uses the same word again, in *King Henry VI.* Part II:

" Madam, myself have *lim'd* a bush for her."

STEVENS.

PRINCE OF DENMARK. 215

Enter HAMLET.

HAM. Now might I do it, pat, now he is praying;⁵

And now I'll do't;—And so he goes to heaven:

And so am I reveng'd? That would be scann'd:⁶

A villain kills my father; and, for that,
I, his sole son, do this same villain send⁷
To heaven.

Why, this is hire and salary,⁸ not revenge.

He took my father grossly, full of bread;

With all his crimes broad blown,⁹ as flush as May;

And, how his audit stands, who knows, save heaven?²

But, in our circumstance and course of thought,

⁵ —pat, now he is praying;] Thus the folio. The quartos read—but now, &c. STEEVENS.

⁶ —That would be scann'd:] i. e. that should be considered, estimated. STEEVENS.

⁷ I, his sole son, do this same villain send—] The folio reads—*foole* son, a reading apparently corrupted from the quarto. The meaning is plain. I, his only son, who am bound to punish his murderer. JOHNSON.

⁸ —hire and salary,] Thus the folio. The quartos read—*base* and *filly*. STEEVENS.

⁹ He took my father grossly, full of bread;

With all his crimes broad blown,] The uncommon expression, *full of bread*, our poet borrowed from the sacred writings: “Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom; pride, *fullness of bread*, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.” Ezekiel, xvi. 49. MALONE.

² And, how his audit stands, who knows, save heaven?] As it appears from the Ghost's own relation that he was in *purgatory*, Hamlet's doubt could only be how long he had to continue there.

RITSON.

'Tis heavy with him: And am I then reveng'd,
To take him in the purging of his soul,
When he is fit and season'd for his passage?
No.

Up, sword; and know thou a more horrid hent:³
When he is drunk, asleep, or in his rage;
Or in the incestuous pleasures of his bed;⁴
At gaming, swearing;⁵ or about some act
That has no relish of salvation in't:
Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven;⁶
And that his soul may be as damn'd, and black,
As hell, whereto it goes.⁷ My mother stays:
This physick but prolongs thy sickly days. [*Exit.*

³ *Up, sword; and know thou a more horrid hent:]* 'To *bent* is used by Shakspeare for, to *seize*, to *catch*, to *lay hold on*. *Hent* is, therefore, *bold*, or *seizure*. *Lay hold on* him, sword, at a more horrid time. JOHNSON.

See Vol. IV. p. 354, n. 6. STEEVENS.

⁴ *When he is drunk, asleep, or in his rage;
Or in the incestuous pleasures of his bed;]* So, in Marston's *In-
fatiate Countess*, 1603:

"Didst thou not kill him drunk?

"Thou shouldst, or in th' embraces of his lust."

STEEVENS.

⁵ *At gaming, swearing;]* Thus the folio. The quarto, 1604, reads—*At game, a swearing; &c.* MALONE.

⁶ — *that his heels may kick at heaven;]* So, in Heywood's *Silver Age*, 1613:

"Whose heels tript up, kick'd gainst the firmament."

STEEVENS.

⁷ *As hell, whereto it goes.]* This speech, in which Hamlet, represented as a virtuous character, is not content with taking blood for blood, but contrives damnation for the man that he would punish, is too horrible to be read or to be uttered. JOHNSON.

This speech of Hamlet's, as Johnson observes, is horrible indeed; yet some moral may be extracted from it, as all his subsequent calamities were owing to this savage refinement of revenge.

M. MASON.

That a sentiment so infernal should have met with imitators, may excite surprize; and yet the same fiend-like disposition is

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The King rises, and advances.

KING. My words fly up, my thoughts remain below:
Words, without thoughts, never to heaven go.
[Exit.

shown by *Lodowick*, in Webster's *White Devil*, or *Vittoria Corombona*, 1612:

" ——— to have poison'd
" The handle of his racket. O, that, that! —
" That while he had been bandying at tennis,
" He might have sworn himself to hell, and struck
" His soul into the hazard!"

Again, in *The Honest Lawyer*, by S. S. 1616:

" I then should strike his body with his soul,
" And sink them both together."

Again, in the third of Beaumont and Fletcher's *Four Plays in One*:

" No; take him dead drunk now, without repentance."

STEVENS.

The same horrid thought has been adopted by Lewis Machin, in *The Dumb Knight*, 1633:

" Nay, but be patient, smooth your brow a little,
" And you shall take them as they clip each other;
" Even in the height of sin; then damn them both,
" And let them stink before they ask God pardon,
" That your revenge may stretch unto their souls,"

MALONE.

I think it not improbable, that when Shakspeare put this horrid sentiment into the mouth of Hamlet, he might have recollected the following story: " One of these monsters meeting his enemy unarmed, threatned to kill him, if he denied not God, his power, and essential properties, viz. his mercy, suffrance, &c. the which, when the other, desiring life, pronounced with great horror, kneeling upon his knees; the bravo cried out, *nowe will I kill thy body and soule*, and at that instant thrust him through with his rapier." *Brief Discourse of the Spanish State, with a Dialogue annexed intitled Philobasilis*, 4to. 1590, p. 24. REED.

A similar story is told in *The Turkish Spy*, Vol. III. p. 243.

MALONE.

S C E N E IV.

*Another Room in the same.**Enter Queen and POLONIUS.*

POL. He will come straight. Look, you lay
 home to him:
 Tell him, his pranks have been too broad to bear
 with;
 And that your grace hath screen'd and stood be-
 tween
 Much heat and him. I'll silence me e'en here.⁷
 Pray you, be round with him.⁸

QUEEN. I'll warrant you;
 Fear me not:—withdraw, I hear him coming.
[POLONIUS *bides himself*.⁹

⁷ — I'll silence me e'en here.] I'll silence me even here, is, I'll use no more words. JOHNSON.

⁸ — be round with him.] Here the folio interposes, improperly I think, the following speech:

“ Ham. [*Within*.] Mother, mother, mother.” STEEVENS.

⁹ Polonius *bides himself*.] The concealment of Polonius in the Queen's chamber, during the conversation between Hamlet and his mother, and the manner of his death, were suggested by the following passage in *The History of Hamblet*, bl. let. fig. D 1: “ The counsellour entered secretly into the queene's chamber, and there *hid himselfe behinde the arras*, and long before the queene and Hamlet came thither; who being craftie and polittique, as soone as hee was within the chamber, doubting some treason, and fearing if he should speake severely and wisely to his mother, touching his secret practises, hee should be understood, and by that means intercepted, used his ordinary manner of dissimulation, and began to come [*r. crow*] like a cocke, beating with his arms (in such manner as cockes use to strike with their wings) upon the hangings of the chamber; whereby feeling something stirring under them, he cried, *a rat, a rat*, and presently drawing his sworde, thrust it into the

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Enter HAMLET.

HAM. Now, mother; what's the matter?

QUEEN. Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

HAM. Mother, you have my father much offended.

QUEEN. Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

HAM. Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.

QUEEN. Why, how now, Hamlet?

HAM. What's the matter now?

QUEEN. Have you forgot me?

HAM. No, by the rood, not so:
You are the queen, your husband's brother's wife;
And,—'would it were not so!'²—you are my mother.

QUEEN. Nay, then I'll set those to you that can speak.

HAM. Come, come, and sit you down; you shall not budge;
You go not, till I set you up a glass
Where you may see the inmost part of you.

QUEEN. What wilt thou do? thou wilt not murder me?

Help, help, ho!

POL. [*Bebind.*] What, ho! help!

hangings; which done, pulled the counsellour (half-deade) out by the heeles, made an ende of killing him; and, being slaine, cut his body in pieces, which he caused to be boyled, and then cast it into an open vault or privie." MALONE.

² *And—'would it were not so!']* The folio reads,
But *would you were not so.* HENDERSON.

HAM.

How now! a rat?³

[*Draws.*

Dead, for a ducat, dead.

[HAMLET makes a pass through the arras.

POL. [*Bebind.*]

O, I am slain.

[*Falls, and dies.*

QUEEN. O me, what hast thou done?

HAM.

Nay, I know not:

Is it the king?

[*Lifts up the arras, and draws forth* POLONIUS.

QUEEN. O, what a rash and bloody deed is this!

HAM. A bloody deed;—almost as bad, good mother,

As kill a king, and marry with his brother.

QUEEN. As kill a king!⁴

³ *How now! a rat?*] This (as Dr. Farmer has observed) is an expression borrowed from *The History of Hamlet*, a translation from the French of Belleforest. STEEVENS.

⁴ *Queen. As kill a king!*] This exclamation may be considered as some hint that the queen had no hand in the murder of Hamlet's father. STEEVENS.

It has been doubted whether Shakspeare intended to represent the queen as accessory to the murder of her husband. The surprise she here expresses at the charge seems to tend to her exculpation. Where the variation is not particularly marked, we may presume, I think, that the poet intended to tell his story as it had been told before. The following extract therefore from *The History of Hamlet*, bl. l. relative to this point, will probably not be unacceptable to the reader: "Fengon [the king in the present play] boldened and encouraged by such impunitie, durst venture to couple himself in marriage with her, whom he used as his concubine during good Horvendille's life; in that sort spotting his name with a double vice, incestuous adulterie, and paracide murther.—This adulterer and infamous murtherer slaunders his dead brother, that he would have slaine his wife, and that hee by chance finding him on the point ready to do it, in defence of the lady, had slaine him.—The unfortunate and wicked woman that had received the honour to be the wife of one of the valiantest and wisest princes in the North, imbased herself in such

HAM. Ay, lady, 'twas my word.—
Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!
[To POLONIUS.]

vile sort as to falsifie her faith unto him, and, which is worse, to marrie him that had bin the tyrannous murderer of her lawful husband; *which made diverse men think that she had been the cause of the murder*, thereby to live in her adulteric without controle." *Hyst. of Hamb.* fig. C 1. 2.

In the conference however with her son, on which the present scene is founded, she strongly asserts her innocence with respect to this fact:

"I know well, my sonne, that I have done thee great wrong in marrying with Fengon, the cruel tyrant and murderer of thy father, and my loyal spouse; but when thou shalt consider the small means of resistance, and the treason of the palace, with the little cause of confidence we are to expect, or hope for, of the courtiers, all wrought to his will; as also the power he made ready if I should have refused to like him; thou wouldst rather excuse, than accuse me of lasciviousness or inconstancy, much less offer me that wrong to suspect that ever thy mother Geruth once consented to the death and murder of her husband: swearing unto thee by the majestie of the gods, that if it had layne in me to have resisted the tyrant, although it had beene with the losse of my blood, yea and of my life, I would surely have saved the life of my lord and husband." *Ibid.* fig. D 4.

It is observable, that in the drama neither the king or queen make so good a defence. Shakspeare wished to render them as odious as he could, and therefore has not in any part of the play furnished them with even the semblance of an excuse for their conduct.

Though the inference already mentioned may be drawn from the surprize which our poet has here made the queen express at being charged with the murder of her husband, it is observable that when the player-queen in the preceding scene says,

"In second husband let me be accus'd!

"None wed the second, *but who kill'd the first*," he has made Hamlet exclaim—"that's wormwood." The prince, therefore, both from the expression and the words addressed to his mother in the present scene, must be supposed to think her guilty. —Perhaps after all this investigation, the truth is, that Shakspeare himself meant to leave the matter in doubt. MALONE.

I know not in what part of this tragedy the king and queen could have been expected to enter into a vindication of their mutual conduct. The former indeed is rendered contemptible as well as

If it be made of penetrable stuff;
If damned custom have not braz'd it so,
That it be proof and bulwark against sense,

QUEEN. What have I done, that thou dar'st wag
thy tongue
In noise so rude against me?

HAM. Such an act,
That blurs the grace and blush of modesty;
Calls virtue, hypocrite; takes off the rose^s

^s ——— *takes off the rose* [Sc.] Alluding to the custom of wearing roses on the side of the face. See a note on a passage in *King John*, Act I. WARBURTON.

I believe Dr. Warburton is mistaken; for it must be allowed that there is a material difference between an ornament worn on the *forehead*, and one exhibited on *the side of the face*. Some have understood these words to be only a metaphorical enlargement of the sentiment contained in the preceding line:

“ ——— blurs the grace and *blush* of modesty:”
but as the *forehead* is no proper situation for a *blush* to be displayed in, we may have recourse to another explanation.

It was once the custom for those who were betrothed, to wear some flower as an external and conspicuous mark of their mutual engagement. So, in Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar for April*:

“ Bring coronations and *sops in wine*,
“ Worn of paramours.”

Lyte, in his *Herbal*, 1578, enumerates *sops in wine* among the smaller kind of single gilliflowers or pinks.

Figure 4, in the *Morrice-dance* (a plate of which is annexed to the First Part of *King Henry IV.*) has a flower fixed on his *forehead*, and seems to be meant for the *paramour* of the female character. The flower might be designed for a *rose*, as the colour of it is red in the painted glass, though its form is expressed with as little adherence to nature as that of the *marygold* in the hand of the lady. It may, however, conduct us to affix a new meaning to the lines in question. This flower, as I have since discovered, is exactly shaped like the *sops in wine*, now called the *Deptford Pink*.

An Address “ To all Judiciall censurers,” prefixed to *The Whipper of the Satyre his pennance in a white Sheet, or the Beadle's Confutation*, 1601, begins likewise thus:

“ Brave sprited gentles, on whose comely front
“ The *rose* of favour sits majesticall,—.”

From the fair forehead of an innocent love,
 And sets a blister there; makes marriage vows
 As false as dicers' oaths: O, such a deed,
 As from the body of contraction⁶ plucks
 The very soul; and sweet religion makes
 A rhapsody of words: Heaven's face doth glow;
 Yea, this solidity and compound mass,
 With tristful visage, as against the doom,
 Is thought-sick at the act.⁷

Sets a *blister* there, has the same meaning as in *Measure for Measure*:

"Who falling in the flaws of her own youth,

"Hath *blister'd* her report."

See Vol. IV. p. 247 and 248, n. 9. STEEVENS.

I believe, by the *rose* was only meant the *roseate hue*. The forehead certainly appears to us an odd place for the hue of innocence to dwell on, but Shakspeare might place it there with as much propriety as a *smile*. In *Troilus and Cressida* we find these lines:

"So rich advantage of a promis'd glory,

"As *smiles* upon the *forehead* of this action."

That part of the forehead which is situated between the eyebrows, seems to have been considered by our poet as the seat of innocence and modesty. So, in a subsequent scene:

"—— brands the harlot,

"Even here, between the *chaste* unsmirched *brow*

"Of my true mother." MALONE.

In the foregoing quotation from *Troilus and Cressida*, I understand that the *forehead* is *smiled upon by advantage*, and not that the *forehead* is *itself the smiler*. Thus, says Laertes in the play before us:

"Occasion *smiles upon* a second *leave*."

But it is not the *leave* that *smiles*, but *occasion* that *smiles upon it*.

In the subsequent passage, our author had no choice; for having alluded to that part of the face which was anciently branded with a mark of shame, he was compelled to place his token of innocence in a corresponding situation. STEEVENS.

⁶ —— from the body of contraction —] *Contraction for marriage contract*. WARBURTON.

⁷ —— Heaven's face doth glow;

Yea, this solidity and compound mass,

With tristful visage, as against the doom,

Is thought-sick at the act.] If any sense can be found here, it is this. The sun glows [and does it not always?] and the very

QUEEN. Ah me, what act,
That roars so loud,⁸ and thunders in the index?⁹

solid mass of earth has a tristful visage, and is thought-sick. All this is sad stuff. The old quarto reads much nearer to the poet's sense:

*Heaven's face does glow,
O'er this solidity and compound mass,
With heated visage, as against the doom,
Is thought-sick at the act.*

From whence it appears, that Shakspeare wrote,
*Heaven's face doth glow,
O'er this solidity and compound mass,
With tristful visage; and, as 'gainst the doom,
Is thought-sick at the act.*

This makes a fine sense, and to this effect. The sun looks upon our globe, the scene of this murder, with an angry and mournful countenance, half hid in eclipse, as at the day of doom.

WARBURTON.

The word *beated*, though it agrees well enough with *glow*, is, I think, not so striking as *tristful*, which was, I suppose, chosen at the revival. I believe the whole passage now stands as the author gave it. Dr. Warburton's reading restores two improprieties, which Shakspeare, by his alteration, had removed. In the first, and in the new reading, *Heaven's face glows with tristful visage*; and, *Heaven's face is thought-sick*. To the common reading there is no just objection. JOHNSON.

I am strongly inclined to think that the reading of the quarto, 1604, is the true one. In Shakspeare's licentious diction, the meaning may be,—The face of heaven doth glow with heated visage over the earth: *and heaven*, as against the day of judgement, is thought-sick at the act.

Had not our poet St. Luke's description of the last day in his thoughts?—"And there shall be signs in the sun and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring: men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking on those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken," &c. MALONE.

⁸ *That roars so loud,*] The meaning is,—*What is this act, of which the discovery, or mention, cannot be made, but with this violence of clamour?* JOHNSON.

⁹ — *and thunders in the index?*] Mr. Edwards observes, that the *indexes* of many old books were at that time inserted at the beginning, instead of the end, as is now the custom. This observation I have often seen confirmed.

HAM. Look here, upon this picture, and on this;¹
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.
See, what a grace was seated on this brow:
Hyperion's curls;² the front of Jove himself;

So, in *Othello*, Act II. sc. vii: "—an *index* and obscure *prologue* to the history of lust and foul thoughts." STEEVENS.

Bullokar in his *Expositor*, 8vo. 1616, defines an *Index* by "A *table* in a booke." The *table* was almost always *prefixed* to the books of our poet's age. Indexes, in the sense in which we now understand the word, were very uncommon. MALONE.

² Look here, upon this picture, and on this;] It is evident from the following words,

"A *station*, like the herald Mercury," &c.

that these pictures, which are introduced as miniatures on the stage, were meant for whole lengths, being part of the furniture of the Queen's closet:

"—like Maia's son he stood,

"And shook his plumes." *Paradise Lost*, Book V.

Hamlet, who, in a former scene, has censured those who gave "forty, fifty, a hundred ducats apiece" for his uncle's "picture in little," would hardly have condescended to carry such a thing in his pocket. STEEVENS.

The introduction of miniatures in this place appears to be a modern innovation. A print prefixed to Rowe's edition of *Hamlet*, published in 1709, proves this. There, the two royal portraits are exhibited as half-lengths, hanging in the Queen's closet; and either thus, or as whole-lengths, they probably were exhibited from the time of the original performance of this tragedy to the death of Betterton. To half-lengths, however, the same objection lies, as to miniatures. MALONE.

We may also learn, that from this print the trick of kicking the chair down on the appearance of the Ghost, was adopted by modern Hamlets from the practice of their predecessors. STEEVENS.

³ Hyperion's curls;] It is observable that *Hyperion* is used by Spenser with the same error in *quantity*. FARMER.

I have never met with an earlier edition of Marston's *Insatiate Countess* than that in 1603. In this the following lines occur, which bear a close resemblance to Hamlet's description of his father:

"A donative he hath of every god;

"Apollo gave him locks, Jove his high front."

— dignos et Apolline crines.

Ovid's Metam. Book III. thus translated by Golding, 1587:

"And haire that one might worthily Apollo's haire it deeme."

STEEVENS.

An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;
A station like the herald Mercury,⁴
New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;⁵
A combination, and a form, indeed,
Where every god did seem to set his seal,
To give the world assurance of a man:
This was your husband.—Look you now, what fol-

lows :

Here is your husband ; like a mildew'd ear,
Blasting his wholesome brother.⁶ Have you eyes?

⁴ *A station like the herald Mercury, &c.*] Station in this instance does not mean the spot where any one is placed, but the act of standing. So, in *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act III. sc. iii:

“ Her motion and her station are as one.”

On turning to Mr. Theobald's first edition, I find that he had made the same remark, and supported it by the same instance. The observation is necessary, for otherwise the compliment designed to the attitude of the king, would be bestowed on the place where Mercury is represented as standing. STEEVENS.

In the first scene of *Timon of Athens*, the poet, admiring a picture, introduces the same image:

“ — How this grace

“ Speaks his own standing !” MALONE.

I think it not improbable that Shakspeare caught this image from Phæar's translation of Virgil, (Fourth *Æneid*,) a book that without doubt he had read:

“ And now approaching neere, the top he seeth and mighty lims

“ Of Atlas, mountain tough, that heaven on boystrous
shoulders beares;—

“ There first on ground with wings of might doth Mercury
arrive,

“ Then down from thence right over seas himselfe doth
headlong drive.”

In the margin are these words: “ The description of Mercury's journey from heaven, along the mountain Atlas in Afrike, bighest on earth.” MALONE.

⁵ — heaven-kissing hill;] So, in *Trissilus and Cressida*:

“ Yon towers whose wanton tops do busie the clouds.”

STEEVENS.

⁶ — like a mildew'd ear,

Blasting his wholesome brother.] This alludes to Pharaoh's Dream, in the 41st chapter of *Genesis*. STEEVENS.

Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,
 And batten⁷ on this moor? Ha! have you eyes?
 You cannot call it, love: for, at your age,
 The hey-day in the blood⁸ is tame, it's humble,
 And waits upon the judgement; And what judge-
 ment
 Would step from this to this? Sense, sure, you
 have,
 Else, could you not have motion:⁹ But, sure, that
 sense

⁷ —batten—] i. e. to grow fat. So, in *Claudius Tiberius Nero*, 1607:

“ ——— and for milk

“ I batten'd was with blood.”

Again, in Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*, 1633:

“ ——— make her round and plump,

“ And batten more than you are aware.”

Bat is an ancient word for *increase*. Hence the adjective *batfal*, so often used by Drayton in his *Polyolbion*. STEEVENS.

⁸ *The hey-day in the blood—*] This expression occurs in Ford's *'Tis Pity she's a Whore*, 1633:

“ ——— must

“ The hey-day of your luxury be fed

“ Up to a surfeit?” STEEVENS.

⁹ — Sense, sure, you have,

Else, could you not have motion:] But from what philosophy our editors learnt this, I cannot tell. Since *motion* depends so little upon *sense*, that the greatest part of *motion* in the universe, is amongst bodies devoid of *sense*. We should read:

Else, could you not have notion,

i. e. intellect, reason, &c. This alludes to the famous peripatetic principle of *Nil fit in intellectu, quod non fuerit in sensu*. And how fond our author was of applying, and alluding to, the principles of this philosophy, we have given several instances. The principle in particular has been since taken for the foundation of one of the noblest works that these latter ages have produced.

WARBURTON.

The whole passage is wanting in the folio; and which soever of the readings be the true one, the poet was not indebted to this boasted philosophy for his choice. STEEVENS.

Sense is sometimes used by Shakspeare for sensation or *sensual*

Is apoplex'd: for madness would not err;
 Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd,
 But it reserv'd some quantity of choice,
 To serve in such a difference. What devil was't,
 That thus hath cozen'd you at hoodman-blind?²
 Eyes without feeling,³ feeling without sight,
 Ears without hands or eyes, smelling fans all,
 Or but a sickly part of one true sense
 Could not so mope.⁴
 O shame! where is thy blush? Rebellious hell,
 If thou canst mutine in a matron's bones,⁵

appetite; as *motion* is for the effect produced by the impulse of nature. Such, I think, is the signification of these words here. So, in *Measure for Measure*:

" — the speaks, and 'tis

" Such sense, that my *sense* breeds with it."

Again, more appositely in the same play, where both the words occur:

" ——— One who never feels

" The wanton stings and *motions* of the *sense*."

So, in Brathwaite's *Survey of Histories*, 1614: "These *continuent* relations will reduce the straggling *motions* to a more settled and retired harbour."

Sense has already been used in this scene, for *sensation*:

" That it be proof and bulwark against *sense*."

MALONE.

² — at hoodman-blind?] This is, I suppose, the same as *blindman's-buff*. So, in *The Wise Woman of Hogsdon*, 1638:

" Why should I play at hood-man blind?"

Again, in *Two lamentable Tragedies in One, the One a Murder of Master Beech*, &c. 1601:

" Pick out men's eyes, and tell them that's the sport

" Of hood-man blind." STEEVENS.

³ *Eyes without feeling*, &c.] This and the three following lines are omitted in the folio. STEEVENS.

⁴ *Could not so mope*.] i. e. could not exhibit such marks of stupidity. The same word is used in *The Tempest*, sc. ult:

" And were brought *moping* hither." STEEVENS.

⁵ — Rebellious hell,

If thou canst mutine in a matron's bones, &c.] Thus the old

To flaming youth let virtue be as wax,
And melt in her own fire : proclaim no shame,
When the compulsive ardour gives the charge;
Since frost itself as actively doth burn,
And reason panders will.⁶

QUEEN. O Hamlet, speak no more :
Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul ;
And there I see such black and grained⁷ spots,
As will not leave their tinct.⁸

copies. Shakspeare calls *mutineers*,—*mutines*, in a subsequent scene. STEEVENS.

So, in *Othello*:

“ ——— this hand of yours requires
“ A sequester from liberty, fasting and prayer,
“ Much castigation, exercise devout ;
“ For here's a young and sweating devil here,
“ That commonly *rebels*.”

To *mutine* for which the modern editors have substituted *mutiny*, was the ancient term, signifying to rise in *mutiny*. So, in Knolles's *History of the Turks*, 1603: “ The Janisaries—became wonderfully discontented, and began to *mutine* in diverse places of the citie.”

MALONE.

⁶ ——— *reason* panders *will*.] So, the folio, I think rightly; but the reading of the quarto is defensible:

—— *reason* pardons *will*. JOHNSON.

Panders was certainly Shakspeare's word. So, in *Venus and Adonis*:

“ When *reason* is the *barwd* to *lust's* abuse.” MALONE.

⁷ ——— *grained* —] Died in grain. JOHNSON.

I am not quite certain that the epithet—*grained* is justly interpreted. Our author employs the same adjective in *The Comedy of Errors*:

“ Though now this *grained* face of mine be hid,” &c.
and in this instance the allusion is most certainly to the furrows in the *grain* of wood.

Shakspeare might therefore design the Queen to say, that her spots of guilt were not merely superficial, but indented.—A passage, however, in *Twelfth Night*, will sufficiently authorize Dr. Johnson's explanation: “ 'Tis in *grain*, fir, 'twill endure wind and weather.”

STEEVENS.

⁸ *As will not leave their tinct*.] To *leave* is to part with, give up, resign. So, in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*:

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HAM. Nay, but to live
In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed;⁹
Stew'd in corruption; honeying, and making love
Over the nasty stye;—

QUEEN. O, speak to me no more;
These words like daggers enter in mine ears;
No more, sweet Hamlet.

HAM. A murderer, and a villain:
A slave, that is not twentieth part the tythe
Of your precedent lord:—a vice of kings:²
A cutpurse of the empire and the rule;
That from a shelf the precious diadem stole,³
And put it in his pocket!

“ It seems, you lov'd her not, to *leave* her token.”
The quartos read:

As will leave there their tinæ. STEEVENS.

⁹ — enseamed *bed*;] Thus the folio: i. e. *greasy* bed.

JOHNSON.

Thus also the quarto, 1604. Beaumont and Fletcher use the word *inseamed* in the same sense, in the third of their *Four Plays in One*:

“ His leachery *inseam'd* upon him.”

In *The Book of Hawkyng*, &c. bl. l. no date, we are told that
“ *Ensayme* of a hauke is *the grece*.”

In some places it means hogs' lard, in others, the grease or oil with which clothiers besmear their wool to make it draw out in spinning.

Incestuous is the reading of the quarto, 1611. STEEVENS.

In the West of England, the *inside fat* of a goose, when dissolved by heat, is called its *seam*; and Shakspeare has used the word in the same sense in his *Troilus and Cressida*:

“ ——— shall the proud lord,

“ That bastes his arrogance with his own *seam*.”

HENLEY.

² — *vice of kings*:] A low mimick of kings. The vice is the fool of a farce; from whence the modern *punch* is descended.

JOHNSON.

³ *That from a shelf &c.*] This is said not unmeaningly, but to

QUEEN.

No more.

Enter Ghost.

HAM. A king
Of shreds and patches :⁴—
Save me, and hover o'er me with your wings,
You heavenly guards !—What would your gracious
figure?

QUEEN. Alas, he's mad,

HAM. Do you not come your tardy son to chide,
That, laps'd in time and passion,⁵ lets go by
The important acting of your dread command?
O, say!

GHOST. Do not forget : This visitation
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.
But, look ! amazement on thy mother sits :
O, step between her and her fighting soul ;
Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works ;⁶
Speak to her, Hamlet.

HAM. How is it with you, lady?

QUEEN. Alas, how is't with you?
That you do bend your eye on vacancy,
And with the incorporal air do hold discourse?

show, that the usurper came not to the crown by any glorious villainy that carried danger with it, but by the low cowardly theft of a common pilferer. WARBURTON.

⁴ *A king*

Of shreds and patches :] This is said, pursuing the idea of the *vice of kings*. The *vice* was dressed as a fool, in a coat of party-coloured patches. JOHNSON.

⁵ — *laps'd in time and passion,*] That, having suffered *time* to slip, and *passion* to cool, lets go &c. JOHNSON.

⁶ *Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works ;*] *Conceit* for *imagination*. So, in *The Rape of Lucrece* :

“ And the conceited painter was so nice.” MALONE.

See Vol. XIV. p. 444, n. 8. STEEVENS.

Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep ;
And, as the sleeping soldiers in the alarm,
Your bedded hair, like life in excrements,⁷
Starts up, and stands on end. O gentle son,
Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper
Sprinkle cool patience.⁸ Whereon do you look ?

HAM. On him ! on him !—Look you, how pale
he glares !

His form and cause conjoin'd, preaching to stones,
Would make them capable.⁹—Do not look upon
me ;

Left, with this piteous action, you convert

⁷ — like life in excrements,] The hairs are excrementitious, that is, without life or sensation ; yet those very hairs, as if they had life, start up, &c. POPE,

So, in *Macbeth* :

“ The time has been —

“ ————— my fell of hair,

“ Would at a dismal treatise rouse and stir,

“ As life were in't.” MALONE.

Not only the hair of animals having neither life nor sensation was called an *excrement*, but the feathers of birds had the same appellation. Thus, in Walton's *Complete Angler*, P. I. c. i. p. 9, edit. 1766 : “ I will not undertake to mention the several kinds of fowl by which this is done, and his curious palate pleased by day ; and which, with their very *excrements*, afford him a soft lodging at night. WHALLEY.

⁸ Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper

Sprinkle cool patience.] This metaphor seems to have been suggested by an old black letter novel, (already quoted in a note on *The Merchant of Venice*, Act III. sc. ii.) Green's *History of the fair Bellara* : “ Therefore flake the burning beate of thy flaming affections, with some drops of cooling moderation.” STEEVENS.

⁹ His form and cause conjoin'd, preaching to stones,

Would make them capable.] Capable here signifies intelligent ; endued with understanding. So, in *King Richard III* :

“ ————— O, tis a parlous boy,

“ Bold, quick, ingenious, forward, capable.”

We yet use capacity in this sense. See also Vol. XI. p. 177, &c. R. 9. MALONE.

My stern effects :² then what I have to do
Will want true colour ; tears, perchance, for blood.

QUEEN. To whom do you speak this ?

HAM. Do you see nothing there ?

QUEEN. Nothing at all ; yet all, that is, I see.

HAM. Nor did you nothing hear ?

QUEEN. No, nothing, but ourselves.

HAM. Why, look you there ! look, how it steals
away !

My father, in his habit as he liv'd !³

Look, where he goes, even now, out at the portal !
[Exit Ghost.]

QUEEN. This is the very coinage of your brain :
This bodiless creation ecstasy
Is very cunning in.⁴

HAM. Ecstasy !

² *My stern effects :*] *Effects* for actions ; deeds *effected*.

MALONE.

³ *My father, in his habit as he liv'd !*] If the poet means by this expression, that his father appeared in his own *familiar habit*, he has either forgot that he had originally introduced him in *armour*, or must have meant to vary his dress at this his last appearance. The difficulty might perhaps be a little obviated by pointing the line thus :

My father—in his habit—as he liv'd ! STEEVENS.

A man's armour, who is used to wear it, may be called his *habit*, as well as any other kind of clothing. *As he lived*, probably means—"as if he were alive—as if he lived." M. MASON.

As if is frequently so used in these plays ; but this interpretation does not entirely remove the difficulty which has been stated.

MALONE.

⁴ *This is the very coinage of your brain :*

This bodiless creation ecstasy

Is very cunning in.] So, in *The Rape of Lucrece* :

"Such shadows are the weak brain's forgeries." MALONE.

Ecstasy in this place, and many others, means a temporary alienation of mind, a fit. So, in *Eliofo Libidinoso*, a novel, by John Hinde, 1606 : "—that bursting out of an *ecstasy* wherein

My pulse, as yours, doth temperately keep time,
And makes as healthful musick : It is not madness,
That I have utter'd : bring me to the test,
And I the matter will re-word ; which madness
Would gambol from. Mother, for love of grace,
Lay not that flattering unction to your soul,
That not your trespass, but my madness, speaks :
It will but skin and film the ulcerous place ;⁵
Whiles rank corruption, mining all within,
Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven ;
Repent what's past ; avoid what is to come ;
And do not spread the compost on the weeds,⁶
To make them ranker. Forgive me this my virtue :
For, in the fatness of these purpy times,
Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg ;
Yea, curb⁷ and woo, for leave to do him good.

QUEEN. O Hamlet ! thou hast cleft my heart in
twain.

HAM. O, throw away the worser part of it,
And live the purer with the other half.
Good night : but go not to my uncle's bed ;
Assume a virtue, if you have it not.
That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat
Of habit's devil, is angel yet in this ;⁸

she had long stood, like one beholding Medusa's head, lament-
ing" &c. STEEVENS.

See Vol. VII. p. 464, n. 4. MALONE.

⁵ — skin and film the ulcerous place ;] The same indelicate
allusion occurs in *Measure for Measure* :

" That skins the vice o' the top." STEEVENS.

⁶ — do not spread the compost &c.] Do not, by any new indul-
gence, heighten your former offences. JOHNSON.

⁷ — curb —] That is, bend and truckle. Fr. courber. So, in
Pierce Plowman :

" Then I courbid on my knees," &c. STEEVENS.

⁸ That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat
Of habit's devil, is angel yet in this ;] This passage is left out

That to the use of actions fair and good
 He likewise gives a frock, or livery,
 That aptly is put on: Refrain to-night;
 And that shall lend a kind of easiness
 To the next abstinence: the next more easy:⁹
 For use almost can change the stamp of nature,
 And either curb the devil,² or throw him out
 With wondrous potency. Once more, good night!
 And when you are desirous to be blest'd,
 I'll blessing beg of you.—For this same lord,
 [Pointing to POLONIUS.

in the two elder folios: it is certainly corrupt, and the players did the discreet part to stifle what they did not understand. *Habit's devil* certainly arose from some conceited tamperer with the text, who thought it was necessary, in contrast to *angel*. The emendation in my text I owe to the sagacity of Dr. Thirlby:

*That monster custom, who all sense doth eat
 Of habits evil, is angel &c.* THEOBALD.

I think Thirlby's conjecture wrong, though the succeeding editions have followed it; *angel* and *devil* are evidently opposed. JOHNSON.

I incline to think with Dr. Thirlby; though I have left the text undisturbed. From *That monster to put on*, is not in the folio. MALONE.

I would read—*Or habit's devil*. The poet first styles *Custom* a monster, and may aggravate and amplify his description by adding, that it is the "dæmon who presides over habit."—That monster custom, or habit's devil, is yet an angel in this particular. STEEVENS.

⁹ — *the next more easy*:] This passage, as far as *potency*, is omitted in the folio. STEEVENS.

² *And either curb the devil, &c.*] In the quarto, where alone this passage is found, some word was accidentally omitted at the press in the line before us. The quarto, 1604, reads:

And either the devil, or throw him out &c.

For the insertion of the word *curb* I am answerable. The printer or corrector of a later quarto, finding the line nonsense, omitted the word *either*, and substituted *master* in its place. The modern editors have accepted the substituted word, and yet retain *either*; by which the metre is destroyed. The word omitted in the first copy was undoubtedly a monosyllable. MALONE.

This very rational conjecture may be countenanced by the same expression in *The Merchant of Venice*:

"And curb this cruel devil of his will." STEEVENS.

I do repent; But heaven hath pleas'd it so,—
To punish me with this, and this with me,³
That I must be their scourge and minister.
I will bestow him, and will answer well
The death I gave him. So, again, good night!—
I must be cruel, only to be kind:⁴
Thus bad begins, and worse remains behind.—
But one word more, good lady.⁵

QUEEN. What shall I do?

HAM. Not this, by no means, that I bid you do:
Let the bloat king⁶ tempt you again to bed;
Pinch wanton on your cheek; call you, his mouse;⁷

³ *To punish me with this, and this with me,*] To punish me by making me the instrument of this man's death, and to punish this man by my hand. For this, the reading of both the quarto and folio, Sir T. Hanmer and the subsequent editors have substituted, To punish him with me, and me with him. MALONE.

I take leave to vindicate the last editor of the octavo Shakspeare from any just share in the foregoing accusation. Whoever looks into the edition 1785, will see the line before us printed exactly as in this and Mr. Malone's text.—In several preceding instances a similar censure on the same gentleman has been as undeservedly implied. STEEVENS.

⁴ *I must be cruel, only to be kind:]* This sentiment resembles the—*facto pius, et sceleratus eodem*, of Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, B. III. It is thus translated by Golding:

“For which he might both justly kinde, and cruel called bee.”

STEEVENS.

⁵ *But one word more, &c.]* This passage I have restored from the quartos. For the sake of metre, however, I have supplied the conjunction—*But*. STEEVENS.

⁶ *Let the bloat king—]* i. e. the swollen king. *Bloat* is the reading of the quarto, 1604. MALONE.

This again hints at his intemperance. He had already drank himself into a dropsy. BLACKSTONE.

The folio reads—*blunt* king. HENDERSON.

⁷ —his mouse;] *Mouse* was once a term of endearment. So, in Warner's *Albion's England*, 1602, Book II. ch. xvi:

“God blefs thee *mouse*, the bridegroom said,” &c.

And let him, for a pair of reechy kisses,⁸
 Or padling in your neck with his damn'd fingers,
 Make you to ravel all this matter out,
 That I essentially am not in madnes,
 But mad in craft.⁹ 'Twere good, you let him know:

Again, in the *Menæchmi*, 1595: "Shall I tell thee, sweet mouse? I never look upon thee, but I am quite out of love with my wife."

Again, in Churchyard's *Spider and Gout*, 1575:

"She wan the love of all the house,

"And pranckt it like a pretty mouse." STEEVENS.

This term of endearment is very ancient, being found in *A new and merry Enterlude, called the Trial of Treasure*, 1567:

"My mouse, my nebs, my cony sweetie;

"My hope and joye, my whole delight." MALONE.

⁸ — reechy kisses,] *Reechy* is smoky. The author meant to convey a coarse idea, and was not very scrupulous in his choice of an epithet. The same, however, is applied with greater propriety to the neck of a cook-maid in *Coriolanus*. Again, in *Ham Beer Pot's Invisible Comedy*, 1618:

"——— bad him go

"And wash his face, he look'd so reechily,

"Like bacon hanging on the chimney's roof."

STEEVEN.

Reechy properly means *steaming with exudation*, and seems to have been selected, to convey, in this place, its grossest import.

HENLEY.

Reechy includes, I believe, *heat* as well as *smoke*. The verb to *reech*, which was once common, was certainly a corruption of—to *reek*. In a former passage Hamlet has remonstrated with his mother, on her living

"In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed." MALONE.

⁹ That I essentially am not in madnes,

But mad in craft.] The reader will be pleased to see Dr. Farmer's extract from the old quarto *Historie of Hamblet*, of which he had a fragment only in his possession.—"It was not without cause, and just occasion, that my gestures, countenances, and words, seemed to proceed from a madman, and that I desire to have all men esteeme mee wholly deprived of sense and reasonable understanding, because I am well assured, that he that hath made no conscience to kill his owne brother, (accustomed to murders, and allured with desire of gouernement without controll in his treasons) will not spare to saue himselfe with the like cruelty, in the blood

For who, that's but a queen, fair, sober, wise,
Would from a paddock, from a bat, a gib,¹
Such dear concernings hide? who would do so?
No, in despite of sense, and secrecy,
Unpeg the basket on the house's top,
Let the birds fly;² and, like the famous ape,

and flesh of the loyns of his brother, by him massacred: and therefore it is better for me to sayne madnesse, then to use my right senses as nature hath bestowed them upon me. The bright shining clearnes thereof I am forced to hide vnder this shadow of dissimulation, as the sun doth hir beams under some great cloud, when the wether in summer-time ouercasteth: the face of a madman serueth to couer my gallant countenance, and the gestures of a fool are fit for me, to the end that, guiding myself wisely therin, I may preserue my life for the Danes and the memory of my late deceased father; for that the desire of reuenging his death is so ingraven in my heart, that if I dye not shortly, I hope to take such and so great vengeance, that these countreyes shall for euer speake thereof. Neuerthelesse I must stay the time, meanes, and occasion, lest by making ouer-great haile, I be now the cause of mine own sodaine ruine and ouerthrow, and by that meanes end, before I beginne to effect my hearts desire: hee that hath to doe with a wicked, disloyall, cruell, and discourteous man, must vse craft, and politike inuentions, such as a fine witte can best imagine, not to discouer his interprise; for seeing that by force I cannot effect my desire, reason alloweth me by dissimulation, subtiltie, and secret practises to proceed therein." STEEVENS.

² ——— a gib,] So, in Drayton's *Epistle from Elinor Cobham to Duke Humphrey*:

"And call me beldam, gib, witch, night-mare, trot."

Gib was a common name for a cat. So, in Chaucer's *Romaunt of the Rose*, ver. 6204:

"——— gibbe our cat,

"That waiteth mice and rats to killen." STEEVENS.

See Vol. VIII. p. 376, n. 6. MALONE.

¹ Unpeg the basket on the house's top,

Let the birds fly;] Sir John Suckling, in one of his letters, may possibly allude to the same story; "It is the story of the *jackanapes* and the partridges; thou starest after a beauty till it be lost to thee, and then let'st out another, and starest after that till it is gone too."

WARNER.

To try conclusions,⁴ in the basket creep,
And break your own neck down.

QUEEN. Be thou assur'd, if words be made of
breath,
And breath of life, I have no life to breathe
What thou hast said to me.

HAM. I must to England;⁵ you know that?

QUEEN. Alack,
I had forgot; 'tis so concluded on.

HAM. There's letters seal'd:⁶ and my two school-
fellows,—
Whom I will trust, as I will adders fang'd,⁷—
They bear the mandate; they must sweep my way,⁸
And marshal me to knavery: Let it work;
For 'tis the sport, to have the engineer

⁴ *To try conclusions,*] i. e. experiments. See Vol. V. p. 428, n. 2.
STEEVENS.

⁵ *I must to England;*] Shakspeare does not inform us how Hamlet came to know that he was to be sent to England. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern were made acquainted with the King's intentions for the first time in the very last scene; and they do not appear to have had any communication with the prince since that time. Add to this, that in a subsequent scene, when the King, after the death of Polonius, informs Hamlet he was to go to England, he expresses great surprize, as if he had not heard any thing of it before.—This last, however, may, perhaps, be accounted for, as contributing to his design of passing for a madman. MALONE.

⁶ *There's letters seal'd:* &c.] The nine following verses are added out of the old edition. POPE.

⁷ — *adders fang'd,*] That is, adders with their *fangs* or *poisonous teeth*, undrawn. It has been the practice of mountebanks to boast the efficacy of their antidotes by playing with vipers, but they first disabled their fangs. JOHNSON.

⁸ — *they must sweep my way,* &c.] This phrase occurs again *Antony and Cleopatra*:

“ — some friends, that will

“ *Sweep your way* for you.” STEEVENS.

Hoist⁹ with his own petar: and it shall go hard,
 But I will delve one yard below their mines,
 And blow them at the moon: O, 'tis most sweet,
 When in one line two crafts directly meet.²—
 This man shall set me packing.
 I'll lug the guts into the neighbour room:³—
 Mother, good night.—Indeed, this counsellor
 Is now most still, most secret, and most grave,
 Who was in life a foolish prating knave.
 Come, fir, to draw toward an end with you:⁴—
 Good night, mother.

[*Exeunt severally*; HAMLET dragging in POLONIUS.]

⁹ *Hoist* &c.] *Hoist*, for *boised*; as *past*, for *passed*. STEEVENS.

² *When in one line two crafts directly meet.*] Still alluding to a countermine. MALONE.

The same expression has already occurred in *King John*, Act IV. speech ult:

“Now powers from home, and discontents at home,

“*Meet in one line.*” STEEVENS.

³ *I'll lug the guts into the neighbour room:*] A line somewhat similar occurs in *King Henry VI.* Part III:

“I'll throw thy body in another room,——.”

The word *guts* was not anciently so offensive to delicacy as it is at present; but was used by Lyly (who made the *first* attempt to polish our language) in his serious compositions. So, in his *Mydas*, 1592: “Could not the treasure of Phrygia, nor the tributes of Greece, nor mountains in the East, whose *guts* are gold, satisfy thy mind?” In short, *guts* was used where we now use *entrails*. Stanyhurst often has it in his translation of Virgil, 1582:

Pectoribus inhians spirantia consulit exta.

“She weenes her fortune by *guts* hoate smoakye to conster.” STEEVENS.

⁴ *Come, fir, to draw toward an end with you:*] Shakspeare has been unfortunate in his management of the story of this play, the most striking circumstances of which arise so early in its formation, as not to leave him room for a conclusion suitable to the importance of its beginning. After this last interview with the Ghost, the character of Hamlet has lost all its consequence.

STEEVENS.

A C T IV.^s S C E N E I.*The same.**Enter King, Queen, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.*

KING. There's matter in these sighs; these profound heaves;
You must translate: 'tis fit we understand them:
Where is your son?

QUEEN. Bestow this place on us a little while.⁶—
[*To ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN, who go out.*

Ah, my good lord,⁷ what have I seen to-night?

KING. What, Gertrude? How does Hamlet?

QUEEN. Mad as the sea, and wind, when both contend⁸

Which is the mightier: In his lawless fit,

⁵ *Act IV.*] This play is printed in the old editions without any separation of the acts. The division is modern and arbitrary; and is here not very happy, for the pause is made at a time when there is more continuity of action than in almost any other of the scenes.
JOHNSON.

⁶ *Bestow this place on us a little while.*] This line is wanting in the folio. STEEVENS.

⁷ — my good lord,] The quartos read—*mine own* lord.

STEEVENS.

⁸ *Mad as the sea, and wind, when both contend &c.*] We have precisely the same image in *King Lear*, expressed with more brevity:

“ — he was met even now,

“ *As mad as the vex'd sea.*” MALONE.

Behind the arras hearing something stir,
Whips out his rapier, cries, *A rat! a rat!*
And, in this brainish apprehension, kills
The unseen good old man.

KING. O heavy deed!
It had been so with us, had we been there:
His liberty is full of threats to all;
To you yourself, to us, to every one.
Alas! how shall this bloody deed be answer'd?
It will be laid to us, whose providence
Should have kept short, restrain'd, and out of
haunt,⁹

This mad young man: but, so much was our love,
We would not understand what was most fit;
But, like the owner of a foul disease,
To keep it from divulging, let it feed
Even on the pith of life. Where is he gone?

QUEEN. To draw apart the body he hath kill'd:
O'er whom his very madness, like some ore,²

⁹ — *out of haunt,*] I would rather read, — *out of harm.*

JOHNSON.

Out of haunt, means out of company. So, in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

“Dido and her Sichæus shall want troops,

“And all the *haunt* be ours.”

Again, in Warner's *Albion's England*, 1602, Book V. ch. xxvi:

“And from the smith of heaven's wife allure the amorous
haunt.”

The place where men assemble, is often poetically called the *haunt of men*. So, in *Romeo and Juliet*:

“We talk here in the publick *haunt* of men.” STEEVENS.

² — *like some ore,*] Shakspeare seems to think *ore* to be *or*,
~~that is~~, gold. Base metals have *ore* no less than precious.

JOHNSON.

Shakspeare uses the general word *ore* to express *gold*, because it
was the most excellent of ores.—I suppose we should read “of
~~metal base~~” instead of *metals*, which much improves the construction
of the passage. M. MASON.

Among a mineral of metals base,
Shows itself pure; he weeps for what is done.

KING. O, Gertrude, come away!
The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch,
But we will ship him hence: and this vile deed
We must, with all our majesty and skill,
Both countenance and excuse.—Ho! Guildenstern!

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Friends both, go join you with some further aid:
Hamlet in madness hath Polonius slain,
And from his mother's closet hath he dragg'd him;
Go, seek him out; speak fair, and bring the body
Into the chapel. I pray you, haste in this.

[*Exeunt ROS. and GUIL.*]

Come, Gertrude, we'll call up our wisest friends;
And let them know, both what we mean to do,
And what's untimely done: so, haply, slander,²—

He has perhaps used *ore* in the same sense in his *Rape of Lucre*:

“When beauty boasted blushes, in despite

“Virtue would stain that *ore* with silver white.”

A *mineral* Minshew defines in his Dictionary, 1617, “Any thing that grows in mines, and contains metals.” Shakspeare seems to have used the word in this sense,—for a *rude mass of metals*. In Bullokar's *English Expofitor*, 8vo, 1616, *Mineral* is defined, “*mettall, or any thing digged out of the earth.*” MALONE.

Minerals are *mines*. So, in *The Golden Remains of Hales of Eton*, 1693, p. 34: “Controversies of the times, like spirits in the *minerals*, with all their labour, nothing is done.”

Again, in Hall's *Virgideciarum*, Lib. VI:

“Shall it not be a wild fig in a wall,

“Or fired brimstone in a *minerall*?” STEVENS.

² —[*so, haply, slander, &c.*] Neither these words, nor the following three lines and an half, are in the folio. In the quarto 1604, and all the subsequent quartos, the passage stands thus:

“—And what's untimely done.

“Whose whisper o'er the world's diameter,” &c.

the compositor having omitted the latter part of the first line, as i—

Whose whisper o'er the world's diameter,
As level as the cannon to his blank,³
Transports his poison'd shot,—may miss our name,
And hit the woundless air.⁴—O, come away!
My soul is full of discord, and dismay. [*Exeunt.*

S C E N E II.

Another Room in the same.

Enter HAMLET.

HAM.—Safely stow'd,—[*Ros. &c. within.*
Hamlet! lord Hamlet!] But soft,⁵—what noise?
who calls on Hamlet? O, here they come.

a former scene, (see p. 190, n. 2,) a circumstance which gives additional strength to an observation made in Vol. XII. p. 644, n. 4. Mr. Theobald supplied the *lacuna* by reading,—*For haply slander, &c.* So appears to me to suit the context better; for these lines are rather in apposition with those immediately preceding, than an allusion from them. Mr. M. Mason, I find, has made the same observation.

Shakspeare, as Theobald has observed, again expatiates on the diffusive power of slander, in *Cymbeline*:

“ — No, 'tis slander;
“ Whose edge is sharper than the sword, whose tongue
“ Out-venoms all the worms of Nile, whose breath
“ Rides on the posting winds, and doth bely
“ All corners of the world.” MALONE.

Mr. Malone reads—*So viperous slander.* STEEVENS.

³ — *cannon to his blank,*] The *blank* was the white mark at which shot or arrows were directed. So, in *King Lear*:

“ — let me still remain
“ The true *blank* of thine eye.” STEEVENS.

⁴ — *the woundless air.*] So, in a former scene:

“ It is as *the air invulnerable.*” MALONE.

⁵ — *But soft,*] I have added these two words from the quarto, 1604. STEEVENS.

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Ros. What have you done, my lord, with the dead body?

HAM. Compounded it with dust,⁶ whereto 'tis kin.

Ros. Tell us where 'tis; that we may take it thence,
And bear it to the chapel.

HAM. Do not believe it.

Ros. Believe what?

HAM. That I can keep your counsel, and not mine own. Besides, to be demanded of a sponge!—what replication should be made by the son of a king?

Ros. Take you me for a sponge, my lord?

HAM. Ay, fir; that soaks up the king's countenance, his rewards, his authorities. But such officers do the king best service in the end: He keeps

The folio reads:

"*Ham.* Safely stow'd.

"*Ros. &c. within.* Hamlet! lord Hamlet.

"*Ham.* What noise," &c.

In the quarto, 1604, the speech stands thus:

"*Ham.* Safely stow'd; but soft, what noise? who calls on Hamlet?" &c.

I have therefore printed Hamlet's speech unbroken, and inserted that of Rosencrantz, &c. from the folio, before the words, *but soft, &c.* In the modern editions Hamlet is made to take notice of the noise made by the courtiers, before he has heard it. MALONE.

⁶ *Compounded it with dust,*] So, in *King Henry IV.* Part II:

"Only compound me with forgotten dust."

Again, in our poet's 71st Sonnet:

"When I perhaps compounded am with clay."

MALONE—

them, like an ape,⁷ in the corner of his jaw; first mouth'd, to be last swallow'd: When he needs what you have glean'd, it is but squeezing you, and, spunge, you shall be dry again.

Ros. I understand you not, my lord.

⁷ — *like an ape,*] The quarto has *apple*, which is generally followed. The folio has *ape*, which Sir T. Hanmer has received, and illustrated with the following note:

"It is the way of monkeys in eating, to throw that part of their food, which they take up first, into a pouch they are provided with on each side of their jaw, and there they keep it, till they have done with the rest." JOHNSON.

Surely this should be "like an *ape*, an *apple*." FARMER.

The reading of the folio, *like an ape*, I believe to be the true one, because Shakspeare has the same phraseology in many other places. The word *ape* refers to the king, not to his courtiers. *He keeps them like an ape, in the corner of his jaw, &c.* means, he keeps them, as an ape keeps food, in the corner of his jaw, &c. So, in *King Henry IV.* Part I: "— your chamber-lie breeds fleas like a loach;" i. e. as fast as a loach breeds loaches. Again, in *King Lear*: "They flatter'd me like a dog;" i. e. as a dog *favours upon and flatters his master*.

That the particular food in Shakspeare's contemplation was an *apple*, may be inferred from the following passage in *The Captain*, by Beaumont and Fletcher:

"And lie, and kiss my hand unto my mistress,
"As often as an *ape* does for an *apple*."

I cannot approve of Dr. Farmer's reading. Had our poet meant to introduce both the ape and the apple, he would, I think, have written not *like*, but "as an ape an apple."

The two instances above quoted shew that any emendation is unnecessary. The reading of the quarto is, however, defensible.

MALONE.

Apple in the quarto is a mere typographical error. So, in Peele's *Araynement of Paris*, 1584:

"— you wot it very well

"All that be Dian's maides are vowed to halter *apples* in hell."

The meaning, however, is clearly "as an *ape* does an *apple*."

RITSON.

HAM. I am glad of it: A knavish speech sleeps in a foolish ear.⁸

ROS. My lord, you must tell us where the body is, and go with us to the king.

HAM. The body is with the king,⁹ but the king is not with the body. The king is a thing——

GUIL. A thing, my lord?

HAM. Of nothing:¹ bring me to him. Hide fox, and all after.² [Exeunt.]

⁸ — *A knavish speech sleeps in a foolish ear.*] This, if I mistake not, is a proverbial sentence. MALONE.

Since the appearance of our author's play, these words have become proverbial; but no earlier instance of the idea conveyed by them, has occurred within the compass of my reading. STEEVENS.

⁹ *The body is with the king,*] This answer I do not comprehend. Perhaps it should be,—*The body is not with the king, for the king is not with the body.* JOHNSON.

Perhaps it may mean this,—The body is in the king's house, (i. e. the present king's,) yet the king (i. e. he who should have been king,) is not with the body. Intimating that the usurper is here, the true king in a better place. Or it may mean—*the guilt of the murder lies with the king*, but the king is *not where the body lies*. The affected obscurity of Hamlet must excuse so many attempts to procure something like a meaning. STEEVENS.

¹ *Of nothing:*] Should it not be read—*Or nothing?* When the courtiers remark that Hamlet has contemptuously called the king *a thing*, Hamlet defends himself by observing, that the king must be *a thing*, or *nothing*. JOHNSON.

The text is right. So, in *The Spanish Tragedy*:

“ In troth, my lord, it is a *thing of nothing*.”

And, in one of Harvey's letters “ a silly bug-beare, a sorry puffed of winde, a *thing of nothing*.” FARMER.

So, in Decker's *Match me in London*, 1631:

“ At what dost thou laugh?

“ At a *thing of nothing*, at thee.

Again, in *Look about you*, 1600:

“ A very little thing, a *thing of nothing*.” STEEVENS.

Mr. Steevens has given [i. e. edit. 1778] many parallelisms: but the origin of all is to be look'd for, I believe, in the 144th Psalm, ver. 5: “ Man is like a *thing of nought*.” Mr. Steevens must have

S C E N E III.

Another Room in the same.

Enter King, attended.

KING. I have sent to seek him, and to find the
body.
How dangerous is it, that this man goes loose?
Yet must not we put the strong law on him:
He's lov'd of the distracted multitude,
Who like not in their judgement, but their eyes;
And, where 'tis so, the offender's scourge is weigh'd,
But never the offence. To bear all smooth and
even,
This sudden sending him away must seem
Deliberate pause: Diseases, desperate grown,
By desperate appliance are reliev'd,

Enter ROSENCRANTZ.

Or not at all.—How now? what hath befallen?

Ros. Where the dead body is bestow'd, my lord,
We cannot get from him.

KING. But where is he?

observed, that the book of Common Prayer, and the translation of
the Bible into English, furnished our old writers with many forms
of expression, some of which are still in use. WHALLEY.

³ — *Hide fox, &c.*] There is a play among children called,
Hide fox, and all after. HANMER.

The same sport is alluded to in Decker's *Satiromastix*: “—our
unhandsome-faced poet does play at bo-peep with your grace, and
cries—*All hid, as boys do.*”

This passage is not in the quarto. STEEVENS.

ROS. Without, my lord; guarded, to know your pleasure.

KING. Bring him before us.

ROS. Ho, Guildenstern! bring in my lord.

Enter HAMLET and GUILDENSTERN.

KING. Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?

HAM. At supper.

KING. At supper? Where?

HAM. Not where he eats, but where he is eaten: a certain convocation of politick worms are e'en at him. Your worm is your only emperor for diet: we fat all creatures else, to fat us; and we fat ourselves for maggots: Your fat king, and your lean beggar, is but variable service; two dishes, but to one table; that's the end.

KING. Alas, alas!'

HAM. A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a king; and eat of the fish that hath fed of that worm.

KING. What dost thou mean by this?

HAM. Nothing, but to show you how a king may go a progress⁴ through the guts of a beggar.

KING. Where is Polonius?

- *HAM.* In heaven; send thither to see: if your messenger find him not there, seek him i'the other place yourself. But, indeed, if you find him not

³ *Alas, alas!]* This speech, and the following, are omitted in the folio. STEEVENS.

⁴ — *go a progress*—] Alluding to the royal journeys of state: always styled *progresses*; a familiar idea to those who, like our author, lived during the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King James I. STEEVENS.

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within this month, you shall nose him as you go up the stairs into the lobby.

KING. Go seek him there. [*To some Attendants.*

HAM. He will stay till you come.

[*Exeunt Attendants.*

KING. Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety,—

Which we do tender, as we dearly grieve
For that which thou hast done,—must send thee
hence

With fiery quickness :⁵ Therefore, prepare thyself;
The bark is ready, and the wind at help,⁶
The associates tend, and every thing is bent
For England.

HAM. For England?

KING. Ay, Hamlet.

HAM. Good.

KING. So is it, if thou knew'st our purposes.

HAM. I see a cherub, that sees them.—But, come;
for England!—Farewell, dear mother.

KING. Thy loving father, Hamlet.

HAM. My mother: Father and mother is man
and wife; man and wife is one flesh; and so, my
mother. Come, for England. [*Exit.*

KING. Follow him at foot; tempt him with speed
aboard;

⁵ *With fiery quickness:*] These words are not in the quartos. We meet with *fiery expedition* in *King Richard III.* STEEVENS.

⁶ — *the wind at help,*] I suppose it should be read,

The bark is ready, and the wind at helm. JOHNSON.

— *at help,*] i. e. at hand, ready,—ready to help or assist you. RITSON.

Similar phraseology occurs in *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*:

“ — I'll leave it

“ *At careful nursing.*” STEEVENS.

Delay it not, I'll have him hence to-night :
 Away ; for every thing is seal'd and done
 That else leans on the affair : Pray you, make haste.

[*Exeunt Ros. and GUIL.*]

And, England, if my love thou hold'st at aught,
 (As my great power thereof may give thee sense ;
 Since yet thy cicatrice looks raw and red
 After the Danish sword, and thy free awe
 Pays homage to us,) thou may'st not coldly set
 Our sovereign process ;⁷ which imports at full,
 By letters conjuring⁸ to that effect,

⁷ ——— *thou may'st not coldly set*

Our sovereign process ;] I adhere to the reading of the quarto and folio. Mr. M. Mason observes, that " one of the common acceptations of the verb *set*, is to value or estimate ; as we say to *set* at nought ; and in that sense it is used here." STEEVENS.

Our poet has here, I think, as in many other places, used an elliptical expression : " thou may'st not coldly set *by* our sovereign process ;" thou may'st not *set little by it*, or estimate it lightly. " To *set by*," Cole renders in his Dict. 1679, by *estimo*. " To *set little by*," he interprets *parvi-facio*. See many other instances of similar ellipses, in Vol. XIII. p. 235, n. 5. MALONE.

⁸ *By letters conjuring*—] Thus the folio. The quarto reads,
By letters congruing—. STEEVENS.

The reading of the folio may derive some support from the following passage in *The History of Hamlet*, bl. let. " ——— making the king of England minister of his massacring resolution ; to whom he purposed to send him, [Hamlet,] and by letters *desire* him to put him to death." So also, by a subsequent line :

" *Ham.* Wilt thou know the effect of what I wrote?

" *Hor.* Ay, good my lord.

" *Ham.* An earnest *conjunction* from the king," &c.

The circumstances mentioned as inducing the king to send the prince to England, rather than elsewhere, are likewise found in *The History of Hamlet*.

Effect was formerly used for *act* or *deed*, simply, and is so used in the line before us. So, in Leo's *Historie of Africa*, translated by Pory, folio, 1600, p. 253 : " Three daies after this *effect*, there came to us a Zuum, that is, a captaine," &c. See also *supra*, p. 234, n. 2.

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The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England;
For like the heftick in my blood he rages,⁹
And thou must cure me: Till I know 'tis done,
Howe'er my haps, my joys will ne'er begin.²

[*Exit.*

The verb to *conjure* (in the sense of to *supplicate*,) was formerly accented on the first syllable. So, in *Macbeth*:

"I conjure you, by that which you profess,

"Howe'er you come to know it, answer me."

Again, in *King John*:

"I conjure thee but slowly; run more fast."

Again, in *Romeo and Juliet*:

"I conjure thee, by Rosaline's bright eyes,"—

Again, in *Measure for Measure*:

"O prince, I conjure thee, as thou believ'st," &c.

MALONE.

⁹ —like the *bedick* in my blood he rages,] So, in *Love's Labour's Lost*:

"I would forget her, but a fever, she,

"Reigns in my blood." MALONE.

² *Howe'er my haps, my joys will ne'er begin.*] This being the termination of a scene, should, according to our author's custom, be rhymed. Perhaps he wrote,

Howe'er my hopes, my joys are not begun.

If *haps* be retained, the meaning will be, '*till I know 'tis done, I shall be miserable, whatever befall me.*' JOHNSON.

The folio reads, in support of Dr. Johnson's remark,—

Howe'er my haps, my joys were ne'er begun.

Mr. Heath would read:

Howe'er 't may hap, my joys will ne'er begin. STEEVENS.

By his *haps*, he means his *successes*. His fortune was begun, but his joys were not. M. MASON.

Howe'er my haps, my joys will ne'er begin.] This is the reading of the quarto. The folio, for the sake of rhyme, reads:

Howe'er my haps, my joys were ne'er begun.

But this, I think, the poet could not have written. The king is speaking of the future time. To say, till I *shall* be informed that a certain act *has been* done, whatever may befall me, my joys never *had* a beginning, is surely nonsense. MALONE.

S C E N E IV.

*A Plain in Denmark.**Enter FORTINBRAS, and Forces, marching.*

FOR. Go, captain, from me greet the Danish king;
 Tell him, that, by his licence, Fortinbras
 Craves³ the conveyance of a promis'd march
 Over his kingdom. You know the rendezvous.
 If that his majesty would aught with us,
 We shall express our duty in his eye,⁴
 And let him know so.

CAP. I will do't, my lord.

FOR. Go softly on.

[*Exeunt FORTINBRAS and Forces.*]

Enter HAMLET, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, &c.

HAM. Good fir, whose powers are these?⁵

³ *Craves*—] Thus the quartos. The folio—*Claims*.

STEEVENS.

⁴ *We shall express our duty in his eye,*] So, in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

“ ——— tended her i'the eyes.”

In his eye means in his presence. The phrase appears to have been formulary. See *The Establishment of the Household of Prince Henry*, A. D. 1610: “Also the gentleman-usher shall be careful to see and informe all such as doe service *in the Prince's eye*, that they performe their duties” &c. Again, in *The Regulations for the Government of the Queen's Household*, 1627: “——all such as doe service *in the Queen's eye*.” STEEVENS.

⁵ *Good fir, &c.*] The remaining part of this scene is omitted in the folio. STEEVENS.

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CAP. They are of Norway, fir.

HAM. How purpos'd, fir,
I pray you?

CAP. Against some part of Poland.

HAM. Who
Commands them, fir?

CAP. The nephew to old Norway, Fortinbras.

HAM. Goes it against the main of Poland, fir,
Or for some frontier?

CAP. Truly to speak, fir, and with no addition,
We go to gain a little patch of ground,
That hath in it no profit but the name.
To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it;
Nor will it yield to Norway, or the Pole,
A ranker rate, should it be sold in fee.

HAM. Why, then the Polack never will defend it.

CAP. Yes, 'tis already garrison'd.

HAM. Two thousand souls, and twenty thousand
ducats,

Will not debate the question of this straw:
This is the imposthume of much wealth and peace;
That inward breaks, and shows no cause without
Why the man dies.—I humbly thank you, fir.

CAP. God be wi'you, fir. [Exit Captain.

Ros. Will't please you go, my lord?

HAM. I will be with you straight. Go a little
before. [Exeunt Ros. and GUILD.

How all occasions do inform against me,
And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,
If his chief good, and market of his time,⁶

⁶ — chief good, and market of his time, &c.] If his highest
good, and that for which he sells his time, be to sleep and feed.

JOHNSON.

Market, I think, here means profit. MALONE.

Be but to sleep, and feed? a beast, no more.
 Sure, he, that made us with such large discourse,⁷
 Looking before, and after, gave us not
 That capability and godlike reason
 To fust in us unus'd. Now, whether it be
 Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple⁸
 Of thinking too precisely on the event,—
 A thought, which, quarter'd, hath but one part
 wisdom,

And, ever, three parts coward,—I do not know
 Why yet I live to say, *This thing's to do*;
 Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means,
 To do't. Examples, gross as earth, exhort me:
 Witness, this army, of such mass, and charge,
 Led by a delicate and tender prince;
 Whose spirit, with divine ambition puff'd,
 Makes mouths at the invisible event;
 Exposing what is mortal, and unsure,
 To all that fortune, death, and danger, dare,
 Even for an egg-shell. Rightly to be great,
 Is, not to stir without great argument;⁹

⁷ ——— *large discourse*,] Such latitude of comprehension, such power of reviewing the past, and anticipating the future. JOHNSON.

⁸ ——— *some craven scruple* —] Some cowardly scruple. See Vol. VI. p. 454, n. 4. MALONE.

So, in *King Henry VI.* Part I:

“ Or durst not, for his *craven* heart, say this.” STEEVENS.

⁹ ——— *Rightly to be great*,

Is, not to stir without &c.] This passage I have printed according to the copy. Mr. Theobald had regulated it thus:

——— *Tis not to be great,*

Never to stir without great argument;

But greatly &c.

The sentiment of Shakspeare is partly just, and partly romantic.

——— *Rightly to be great,*

Is, not to stir without great argument;

is exactly philosophical.

But greatly to find quarrel in a straw,

When honour's at the stake,

But greatly to find quarrel in a straw,
 When honour's at the stake. How stand I then,
 That have a father kill'd, a mother stain'd,
 Excitements of my reason, and my blood,²
 And let all sleep? while, to my shame, I see
 The imminent death of twenty thousand men,
 That, for a fantasy, and trick of fame,
 Go to their graves like beds; fight for a plot
 Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
 Which is not tomb enough, and continent,⁴
 To hide the slain?—O, from this time forth,
 My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth!

[Exit.

is the idea of a modern hero. *But then, says he, honour is an argument, or subject of debate, sufficiently great, and when honour is at stake, we must find cause of quarrel in a straw.* JOHNSON.

² *Excitements of my reason, and my blood,*] Provocations which excite both my reason and my passions to vengeance. JOHNSON.

³ — *a plot.*] A piece, or portion. See Vol. XII. p. 145, n. 5. REED.

So, in *The Mirror for Magistrates*:

“Of ground to win a plot, a while to dwell,
 We venture lives, and send our souls to hell.”

HENDERSON.

⁴ — *continent,*] *Continent*, in our author, means that which comprehends or encloses. So, in *King Lear*:

“Rive your concealing continents.”

See Vol. XIV. p. 148, n. 7. STEEVENS.

Again, Lord Bacon *On the Advancement of Learning*, 4to. 1633, p. 7: “—if there be no fulness, then is the continent greater than the content.” REED.

S C E N E V.

Elfinore. *A Room in the Castle.*

Enter Queen and HORATIO.

QUEEN. — I will not speak with her.

HOR. She is importunate; indeed, distract;
Her mood will needs be pitied.

QUEEN. What would she have?

HOR. She speaks much of her father; says, she
hears,
There's tricks i'the world; and hems, and beats
her heart;
Spurns enviously at straws;⁵ speaks things in doubt,
That carry but half sense: her speech is nothing,
Yet the unshaped use of it doth move
The hearers to collection;⁶ they aim at it,⁷
And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts;

⁵ *Spurns enviously at straws;*] *Envy* is much oftener put by our poet (and those of his time) for direct *aversion*, than for *malignity conceived at the sight of another's excellence or happiness*.

So, in *King Henry VIII*:

“ You turn the good we offer into *envy*.”

Again, in *God's Revenge against Murder*, 1621, *Hist. VI*.—
“ She loves the memory of Syontus, and *envies* and detests that of her two husbands.” STEEVENS.

See Vol. IX. p. 616, n. 3; and Vol. XI. p. 61, n. 9. MALONE.


⁶ — *to collection;*] i. e. to deduce consequences from such premises; or, as Mr. M. Mason observes, “ endeavour to collect some meaning from them.” So, in *Cymbeline*, scene the last:

“ — whose containing

“ Is so from sense to hardness, that I can

“ Make no *collection* of it.”

See the note on this passage, Vol. XIII. p. 234. STEEVENS.

⁷ — *they aim at it,*] The quartos read—*they yawn at it.*  ^o
aim is to guess. So, in *Romeo and Juliet*:

“ I *aim'd* so near, when I suppos'd you lov'd.” STEEVENS.

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Which, as her winks, and nods, and gestures yield them,

Indeed would make one think, there might be thought,

Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.⁸

QUEEN. 'Twere good, she were spoken with;'
for she may strew

Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds:

Let her come in. [Exit HORATIO.]

To my sick soul, as sin's true nature is,

Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss:²

⁸ *Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.*] i. e. though her meaning cannot be certainly collected, yet there is enough to put a mischievous interpretation to it. WARBURTON.

That *unhappy* once signified *mischievous*, may be known from P. Holland's translation of *Pliny's Natural History*, Book XIX. ch. vii.: "—— the shrewd and *unhappy* fowles which lie upon the lands, and eat up the seed new sowne." We still use *unlucky* in the same sense. STEEVENS.

See Vol. IV. p. 440, n. 9; and Vol. VI. p. 344, n. 5; and Vol. XI. p. 55, n. 6. MALONE.

⁹ *'Twere good, she were spoken with;*] These lines are given to the Queen in the folio, and to Horatio in the quarto. JOHNSON.

I think the two first lines of Horatio's speech [*'Twere good, &c.*] belong to him; the rest to the Queen. BLACKSTONE.

In the quarto, the Queen, Horatio, and a *Gentleman*, enter at the beginning of this scene. The two speeches, "She is importunate," &c. and "She speaks much of her father," &c. are there given to the *Gentleman*, and the line now before us, as well as the two following, to *Horatio*: the remainder of this speech to the Queen. I think it probable that the regulation proposed by Sir W. Blackstone was that intended by Shakspeare. MALONE.

² —— *to some great amiss:*] Shakspeare is not singular in his use of this word as a substantive. So, in *The Arraignment of Paris*, 1584:

"Gracious forbearers of this world's amiss."

Again, in Lyly's *Woman in the Moon*, 1597:

"Pale be my looks, to witness my amiss."

Again, in Greene's *Disputation between a Ile Coneycatcher, &c.* 1592: "—— revive in them the memory of my great amiss."

STEEVENS.

Each toy is, each trifle. MALONE.

So full of artless jealousy is guilt,
It spills itself, in fearing to be spilt.

Re-enter HORATIO, with OPHELIA.

OPH. Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark?

QUEEN. How now, Ophelia?

OPH. *How should I your true love know²
From another one?*

*By his cockle hat and staff,
And his sandal shoon.³* [Singing.

QUEEN. Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?

² *How should I your true love &c.*] There is no part of this play in its representation on the stage, more pathetick than this scene; which, I suppose, proceeds from the utter insensibility Ophelia has to her own misfortunes.

A great sensibility, or none at all, seems to produce the same effect. In the latter the audience supply what she wants, and with the former they sympathize. Sir J. REYNOLDS.

³ *By his cockle hat and staff,*

And his sandal shoon.] This is the description of a pilgrim. While this kind of devotion was in favour, love-intrigues were carried on under that mask. Hence the old ballads and novels made pilgrimages the subjects of their plots. The cockle-shell hat was one of the essential badges of this vocation: for the chief places of devotion being beyond sea, or on the coasts, the pilgrims were accustomed to put cockle-shells upon their hats, to denote the intention or performance of their devotion. WARBURTON.

So, in Green's *Never too late*, 1616:

“ A hat of straw like to a swain,

“ Shelter for the sun and rain,

“ With a scallop-shell before,” &c.

Again, in *The Old Wives Tale*, by George Peele, 1595: “ I will give thee a palmer's staff of yvorie, and a scallop-shell of beaten gold.” STEEVENS.

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OPH. Say you? nay, pray you, mark.

He is dead and gone, lady, [Sings.
He is dead and gone;
At his head a grafs-green turf,
At his heels a stone.

O, ho!

QUEEN. Nay, but Ophelia,—

OPH. Pray you, mark.

White his shroud as the mountain snow,
[Sings.

Enter King.

QUEEN. Alas, look here, my lord.

OPH. *Larded all with sweet flowers;*⁴
*Which bewept to the grave did go,*⁵
With true-love showers.

KING. How do you, pretty lady?

OPH. Well, God'ield you!⁶ They say, the owl
was a baker's daughter.⁷ Lord, we know what we

⁴ *Larded all with sweet flowers;*] The expression is taken from cookery. JOHNSON.

⁵ *—did go,*] The old editions read—*did not go*. Corrected by Mr. Pope. STEEVENS.

⁶ *Well, God'ield you!*] i. e. Heaven reward you! So, in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

“Tend me to-night two hours, I ask no more,

“And the Gods yield you for't!”

So Sir John Grey, in a letter in Ashmole's Appendix to his Account of the Garter, Numb. 46: “The king of his gracious lordship, God yield him, hath chosen me to be owne of his brethrene of the knyghts of the garter.” THEOBALD.

See Vol. VII. p. 383, &c. n. 6. STEEVENS.

⁷ *—the owl was a baker's daughter.*] This was a metamorphosis of the common people, arising from the mealy appearance of the owl's feathers, and her guarding the bread from mice.

WARBURTON.

To guard the bread from mice, is rather the office of a cat than

are, but know not what we may be. God be at your table!

KING. Conceit upon her father.

OPH. Pray, let us have no words of this; but when they ask you, what it means, say you this:

*Good morrow, 'tis Saint Valentine's day,^s
All in the morning betime,
And I a maid at your window,
To be your Valentine:*

an owl. In barns and granaries, indeed, the services of the owl are still acknowledged. This was, however, no *metamorphosis of the common people*, but a legendary story, which both Dr. Johnson and myself have read, yet in what book at least I cannot recollect. —Our Saviour being refused bread by the daughter of a baker, is described as punishing her by turning her into an owl.

STEEVENS.

This is a common story among the vulgar in Gloucestershire, and is thus related: "Our Saviour went into a baker's shop where they were baking, and asked for some bread to eat. The mistress of the shop immediately put a piece of dough into the oven to bake for him; but was reprimanded by her daughter, who insisting that the piece of dough was too large, reduced it to a very small size. The dough, however, immediately afterwards began to swell, and presently became of a most enormous size. Whereupon, the baker's daughter cried out "Heugh, heugh, heugh," which owl-like noise probably induced our Saviour for her wickedness to transform her into that bird." This story is often related to children, in order to deter them from such illiberal behaviour to poor people.

DOUGL.

^s Good morrow, 'tis Saint Valentine's day.] Old copies: .
To-morrow is &c.

The correction is Dr. Farmer's. STEEVENS.

There is a rural tradition that about this time of year birds choose their mates. Bourne in his *Antiquities of the Common People*, observes, that "it is a ceremony never omitted among the vulgar, to draw lots, which they term *Valentines*, on the eve before Valentine-day. The names of a select number of one sex are by an equal number of the other put into some vessel; and after that every one draws a name, which for the present is called their *Valentine*, and is also look'd upon as a good omen of their being man and

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*Then up he rose, and don'd his clothes,⁹
And dupp'd the chamber door;²
Let in the maid, that out a maid
Never departed more.*

KING. Pretty Ophelia!

OPH. Indeed, without an oath, I'll make an end
on't:

*By Gis,³ and by Saint Charity,⁴
Alack, and fye for shame!
Young men will do't, if they come to't;
By cock,⁵ they are to blame.*

wise afterwards." Mr. Brand adds, that he has "searched the legend of St. Valentine, but thinks there is no occurrence in his life, that could give rise to this ceremony." MALONE.

⁹ — don'd his clothes,] To *don*, is to *do on*, to put on, as *doff* is to *do off*, put off. STEEVENS.

² And dupp'd the chamber door;] To *dup*, is to *do up*; to lift the latch. It were easy to write,—And *op'd*—. JOHNSON.

To *dup*, was a common contraction of to *do up*. So, in *Damon and Pythias*, 1582: "—the porters are drunk; will they not *dup* the gate to-day?"

Lord Surrey, in his translation of the second *Æneid*, renders *Panduntur portæ*, &c.

"The gates *cast up*, we issued out to play."

The phrase seems to have been adopted either from *doing up* the latch, or drawing up the portcullis. Again, in *The Cooke's Play*, in the Chester collection of mysteries, MS. Harl. 1013, p. 140:

"Open up hell-gates anon."

It appears from *Martin Mark-all's Apologie to the Bel-man of London*, 1610, that in the cant of gypsies, &c. *Dup* the gigger, signified to open the doore. STEEVENS.

³ By Gis,] I rather imagine it should be read,

By Cis,——

That is, by St. Cecily. JOHNSON.

See the second paragraph of the next note. STEEVENS.

⁴ — by Saint Charity,] *Saint Charity* is a known saint among the Roman Catholics. Spenser mentions her, *Eclog. V.* 255:

"Ah dear lord, and sweet *Saint Charity*!"

*Quoth she, before you tumbled me,
You promis'd me to wed:*

[He answers.⁶]

*So would I ha' done, by yonder sun,
An thou hadst not come to my bed.*

KING. How long hath she been thus?

OPH. I hope, all will be well. We must be patient: but I cannot choose but weep, to think, they should lay him i'the cold ground: My brother shall

Again, in *The Downfall of Robert Earl of Huntington*, 1601:

"Therefore, sweet master, for *Saint Charity*."

I find, by *Gisse*, used as an adjuration, both by Gascoigne in his *Poems*, by Preston in his *Cambyyses*, and in the comedy of *See me, and see me not*, 1618:

"By *Gisse* I swear, were I so fairly wed," &c.

Again, in *King Edward III.* 1599:

"By *Gis*, fair lords, ere many daies be past," &c.

Again, in Heywood's 23d Epigram, Fourth Hundred:

"Nay, by *Gis*, he looketh on you maister, quoth he."

STEEVENS.

In the scene between the Bastard Faulconbridge and the friars and nunne in the First Part of *The troublesome Raigne of King John*, (edit. 1779, p. 256, &c.) the nunne swears by *Gis*, and the friars pray to *Saint Witbold* (another obsolete saint mentioned in *King Lear*. See Vol. XIV. p. 166,) and adjure him by *Saint Charity* to hear them." BLACKSTONE.

By *Gis*,] There is not the least mention of any saint whose name corresponds with this, either in the *Roman Calendar*, the service in *Usum Sarum*, or in the *Benedictionary* of Bishop Athelwold. I believe the word to be only a corrupted abbreviation of *Jesus*, the letters J. H. S. being anciently all that was set down to denote that sacred name, on altars, the covers of books, &c.

RIDLEY.

Though *Gis* may be, and I believe is, only a contraction of *Jesus*, there is certainly a Saint *Gislen*, with whose name it corresponds. RITSON.

⁵ By cock,] This is likewise a corruption of the sacred name. Many instances of it are given in a note at the beginning of the fifth act of the Second Part of *King Henry IV.* STEEVENS.

⁶ He answers.] These words I have added from the quartos.

STEEVEN

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know of it, and so I thank you for your good counsel. Come, my coach! Good night, ladies;¹ good night, sweet ladies: good night, good night.

[Exit.

KING. Follow her close; give her good watch, I pray you. [Exit HORATIO.

O! this is the poison of deep grief; it springs
All from her father's death: And now behold,
O Gertrude, Gertrude,
When sorrows come,² they come not single spies,
But in battalions! First, her father slain;
Next, your son gone; and he most violent author
Of his own just remove: The people muddled,
Thick and unwholesome in their thoughts, and
whispers,
For good Polonius' death; and we have done but
greenly,³
In hugger-mugger to inter him:⁴ Poor Ophelia

¹ Come, my coach! *Good night, ladies; &c.*] In Marlow's *Tamburlaine*, 1590, Zabina in her frenzy uses the same expression: "Hell, make ready my coach, my chair, my jewels. I come, I come." MALONE.

² *When sorrows come, &c.*] In Ray's *Proverbs* we find, "Misfortunes seldom come alone," as a proverbial phrase. REED.

³ — but greenly,] But *unskilfully*; with *greenness*; that is, without maturity of judgement. JOHNSON.

⁴ *In hugger-mugger to inter him:*] All the modern editions that I have consulted, give it,

In private to inter him;—.

That the words now replaced are better, I do not undertake to prove; it is sufficient that they are Shakspeare's: if phraseology is to be changed as words grow uncouth by disuse, or gross by vulgarity, the history of every language will be lost; we shall no longer have the words of any author; and, as these alterations will be often unskilfully made, we shall in time have very little of his meaning. JOHNSON.

On this just observation I ground the restoration of a gross and unpleasing word in a preceding passage, for which Mr. Pope substituted *groan*. See p. 161, n. 7. The alteration in the present instance was made by the same editor. MALONE.

Divided from herself, and her fair judgement;
 Without the which we are pictures, or mere beasts.
 Last, and as much containing as all these,
 Her brother is in secret come from France :
 Feeds on his wonder,² keeps himself in clouds,
 And wants not buzzers to infect his ear
 With pestilent speeches of his father's death ;
 Wherein necessity, of matter beggar'd,³
 Will nothing stick our person to arraign
 In ear and ear. O my dear Gertrude, this,
 Like to a murdering-piece,⁴ in many places

This expression is used in *The Revenger's Tragedy*, 1609:

" — he died like a politician,

" In *bugger-mugger*."

Again, in Harrington's *Ariosto*:

" So that it might be done in *bugger-mugger*."

Shakspeare probably took the expression from the following passage in Sir Thomas North's translation of *Plutarch*:—" Antonius thinking that his body should be honourably buried, and not in *bugger-mugger*."

It appears from Greene's *Groundwork of Coneycatching*, 1592, that to *bugger* was to lurk about. STEEVENS.

The meaning of the expression is ascertained by Florio's *Italian Dictionary*, 1598: "*Dinascofo*, Secretly, hiddenly, in *bugger-mugger*." MALONE.

² Feeds on his wonder,] The folio reads,

Keeps on his wonder,——.

The quarto,

Feeds on this wonder,——.

Thus the true reading is picked out from between them. Sir T. Hanmer reads unnecessarily,

Feeds on his anger,——. JOHNSON.

³ Wherein necessity, &c.] Sir T. Hanmer reads,

Whence animosity, of matter beggar'd.

He seems not to have understood the connection. *Wherein*, that is, in which pestilent speeches, necessity, or, the obligation of an accuser to support his charge, will nothing stick, &c. JOHNSON.

⁴ Like to a murdering piece,] Such a piece as assassins use, with many barrels. It is necessary to apprehend this, to see the justness of the similitude. WARBURTON.

The same term occurs in a passage in *The Double Marriage* of Beaumont and Fletcher:

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Gives me superfluous death! [*A noise within.*]

QUEEN. Alack! what noise is this?

Enter a Gentleman.

KING. Attend.

Where are my Switzers?⁶ Let them guard the door:

"And, like a *murdering piece*, aims not at one,
"But all that stand within the dangerous level."

Again, in *All's Lost by Lust*, a tragedy by Rowley, 1633:

"If thou fail'st too, the king comes with a *murdering piece*,
"In the rear."

Again, in *A Fair Quarrel*, by Middleton and Rowley, 1622:

"There is not such another *murdering piece*
"In all the stock of calumny."

It appears from a passage in Smith's *Sea Grammar*, 1627, that it was a piece of ordnance used in ships of war: "A case-shot is any kinde of small bullets, nailes, old iron, or the like, to put into the case, to shoot out of the ordnances or *murderers*; these will doe much mischief," &c. STEEVENS.

A *murdering-piece* was the specifick term in Shakspeare's time, for a piece of ordnance, or small cannon. The word is found in Cole's Latin Dictionary, 1679, and rendered, "*tormentum murale*."

The small cannon, which are, or were used in the forecassle, half-deck, or sterage of a ship of war, were within this century, called *murdering-pieces*. MALONE.

Perhaps what is now, from the manner of it, called a *swivel*. It is mentioned in Sir T. Roes *Voyage to the E. Indies*, at the end of Della Valle's *Travels*, 1665: "—the East-India company had a very little pinnace...mann'd she was with ten men, and had only one small *murdering-piece* within her." Probably it was never charged with a single ball, but always with shot, pieces of old iron," &c. RITSON.

⁵ *Alack! &c.*] This speech of the Queen is omitted in the quartos. STEEVENS.

⁶ —my Switzers?] I have observed in many of our old plays, that the guards attendant on Kings are called *Switzers*, and that without any regard to the country where the scene lies. Thus, in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Noble Gentleman*, Act III. sc. i:

"——— was it not

"Some place of gain, as clerk to the great band

"Of marrow-bones, that the people call the *Switzers*?

"Men made of beef and farcenet?" REED.

What is the matter?

GENT. Save yourself, my lord;
The ocean, overpeering of his list,⁷
Eats not the flats with more impetuous haste,
Than young Laertes, in a riotous head,
O'erbears your officers! The rabble call him, lord;
And, as the world were now but to begin,
Antiquity forgot, custom not known,
The ratifiers and props of every word,⁸

The reason is, because the Swifs in the time of our poet, as at present, were hired to fight the battles of other nations. So, in Nashe's *Christ's Teares over Jerusalem*, 4to. 1594: "Law, logicke, and the Switzers, may be hired to fight for any body." MALONE.

⁷ *The ocean, over-peering of his list,*] The lists are the barriers which the spectators of a tournament must not pass. JOHNSON.

See note on *Othello*, Act IV. sc. i. STEEVENS.

List, in this place, only signifies *boundary*, i. e. the shore. So, in *King Henry IV.* Part II:

"The very *list*, the very utmost bound

"Of all our fortunes."

The *selvage* of cloth was in both places, I believe, in our author's thoughts. MALONE.

⁸ *The ratifiers and props of every word,*] By *word* is here meant a declaration, or proposal. It is determined to this sense, by the inference it hath to what had just preceded:

"The rabble call him lord," &c.

This acclamation, which is the *word* here spoken of, was made without regard to antiquity, or received custom, whose concurrence, however, is necessarily required to confer validity and stability in every proposal of this kind. HEATH.

Sir T. Hanmer would transpose this line and the next. Dr. Warburton proposes to read, *ward*; and Dr. Johnson, *weal*, instead of *word*. I should be rather for reading, *work*. TYRWHITT.

In the first folio there is only a comma at the end of the above line; and will not the passage bear this construction?—The rabble call him lord, and as if the world were now but to begin, and as if the ancient custom of hereditary succession were unknown, they, the ratifiers and props of every word he utters, cry,—Let us make choice, that Laertes shall be king. TOLLET.

This construction might certainly be admitted, and the *ratifiers and props of every word* might be understood to be applied to the rabble

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They cry, *Choose we; Laertes shall be king!*
Caps, hands, and tongues, applaud it to the clouds,
Laertes shall be king, Laertes king!

QUEEN. How cheerfully on the false trail they
cry!

O, this is counter, you false Danish dogs.⁹

KING. The doors are broke. [Noise within.

Enter LAERTES, arm'd; Danes following.

LAER. Where is this king?—Sirs, stand you all
without.

DAN. No, let's come in.

LAER. I pray you, give me leave.

DAN. We will, we will.

[*They retire without the door.*

LAER. I thank you:—keep the door.—O thou
vile king,

Give me my father.

QUEEN. Calmly, good Laertes.

LAER. That drop of blood, that's calm, pro-
claims me bastard;

Cries, cuckold, to my father; brands the harlot

mentioned in a preceding line, without Sir T. Hanmer's transposition of this and the following line; but there is no authority for what Mr. Toller adds, "of every word *be* [Laertes] *utters*," for the poet has not described Laertes as having uttered a word. If therefore the rabble are called *the ratifiers and props of every word*, we must understand, "of every word *uttered by themselves*:" which is so tame, that it would be unjust to our poet to suppose that to have been his meaning. *Ratifiers*, &c. refer not to the people, but to *custom* and *antiquity*, which the speaker says are the true ratifiers and props of every word. The last word however of the line may well be suspected to be corrupt; and Mr. Tyrwhitt has probably suggested the true reading. MALONE.

⁹ O, *this is counter, you false Danish dogs.*] Hounds run counter when they trace the trail backwards. JOHNSON.

Even here, between the chaste unsmirched brow,²
Of my true mother.

KING. What is the cause, Laertes,
That thy rebellion looks so giant-like?—
Let him go, Gertrude; do not fear our person;
There's such divinity doth hedge a king,
That treason can but peep to what it would,
Acts little of his will.—Tell me, Laertes,
Why thou art thus incens'd;—Let him go, Gertrude;—

Speak, man.

LAER. Where is my father?

KING. Dead.

QUEEN. But not by him.

KING. Let him demand his fill.

LAER. How came he dead? I'll not be juggled
with:

To hell, allegiance! vows, to the blackest devil!
Conscience, and grace, to the profoundest pit!
I dare damnation: To this point I stand,—
That both the worlds I give to negligence,³
Let come what comes; only I'll be reveng'd
Most thoroughly for my father.

KING. Who shall stay you?

LAER. My will, not all the world's:

² —unsmirched brow,] i. e. clean, not defiled. To *besmirch*, our author uses, *Act I. sc. v.* and again in *K. Henry V. Act IV. sc. iii.*

This seems to be an allusion to a proverb often introduced in the old comedies. Thus, in *The London Prodigal*, 1605: “—as true as the skin between any man's brows.”

The same phrase is also found in *Much Ado about Nothing*, *Act III. sc. v.* STEEVENS.

³ *That both the worlds I give to negligence,*] So, in *Macbeth*:
“But let the frame of things disjoint, both the worlds suffer.”
STEEVENS.

And, for my means, I'll husband them so well,
They shall go far with little.

KING. Good Laertes,
If you desire to know the certainty
Of your dear father's death, is't writ in your re-
venge,
That, sweepstake, you will draw both friend and
foe,
Winner and loser?

LAER. None but his enemies.

KING. Will you know them then?

LAER. To his good friends thus wide I'll ope
my arms;
And, like the kind life-rend'ring pelican,⁴
Repast them with my blood.

KING. Why, now you speak
Like a good child, and a true gentleman.
That I am guiltless of your father's death,
And am most sensibly⁵ in grief for it,
It shall as level to your judgement 'pear,⁶

⁴ — *life-rend'ring pelican,*] So, in the ancient *Interlude of Nature*, bl. l. no date:

“ Who taught the cok hys watche-howres to observe,

“ And syng of corage wyth shryll throte on hye?

“ Who taught the *pellycan* her tender hart to carve?—

“ For she nolde suffer her byrdys to dye?”

It is almost needless to add that this account of the bird is entirely fabulous. STEEVENS.

⁵ — *most sensibly*—] Thus the quarto, 1604. The folio, following the error of a later quarto, reads—*most sensible*.

MALONE.

⁶ — *to your judgement 'pear,*] So, the quarto. The folio, and all the later editions, read:

— *to your judgement pierce,*
less intelligibly. JOHNSON.

This elision of the verb to *appear*, is common to Beaumont and Fletcher. So, in *The Maid in the Mill*:

“ They 'pear so handsomely, I will go forward.”

As day does to your eye.

DANES. [*Within.*] Let her come in.

LAER. How now! what noise is that?

Enter OPHELIA, fantastically dress'd with straws and flowers.

O heat, dry up my brains! tears, seven times salt,
Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eye!—
By heaven, thy madness shall be paid with weight,
Till our scale turn the beam. O rose of May!
Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!—
O heavens! is't possible, a young maid's wits
Should be as mortal as an old man's life?
Nature is fine in love: and, where 'tis fine,
It sends some precious instance of itself
After the thing it loves.'

Again,

"And where they 'pear so excellent in little,

"They will but flame in great." STEEVENS.

7 *Nature is fine in love: and, where 'tis fine,*

It sends some precious instance of itself

After the thing it loves.] These lines are not in the quarto, and might have been omitted in the folio without great loss, for they are obscure and affected; but, I think, they require no emendation. *Love* (says Laertes) is the passion by which *nature is not* exalted and *refined*; and as substances, *refined* and subtilised, easily obey any impulse, or follow any attraction, some part of nature, so purified and *refined*, flies off after the attracting object, after the thing it loves:

"As into air the purer spirits flow,

"And separate from their kindred dregs below,

"So flew her soul." JOHNSON.

The meaning of the passage may be—That her wits, like the spirit of fine essences, flew off or evaporated. *Fine*, however, sometimes signifies *artful*. So, in *All's well that ends well*:
"Thou art too *fine* in thy evidence." STEEVENS.

OPH. *They bore him barefac'd on the bier;*⁸
*Hey no nonny, nonny hey nonny:*⁹
And in his grave rain'd many a tear;—

Fare you well, my dove!

LAER. Hadst thou thy wits, and didst persuade
 revenge,
 It could not move thus.

OPH. You must sing, *Down a-down,*² *an you call*
him a-down-a. O, how the wheel becomes it!³ It

⁸ *They bore him bare-fac'd on the bier; &c.*] So, in Chaucer's
Knight's Tale, Mr. Tyrwhitt's edit. ver. 2879:

“ He laid him bare the visage on the bere,
 “ Therwith he wept that pitee was to here.”

STEEVENS.

⁹ *Hey no nonny, &c.*] These words, which were the burthen of
 a song, are found only in the folio. See Vol. XIV. p. 163, n. 9.

MALONE.

² — *sing, Down a-down,*] Perhaps Shakspeare alludes to
Phæbe's Sonnet, by Tho. Lodge, which the reader may find in
England's Helicon, 1600:

“ *Downe a-downe,*

“ Thus Phillis sung,

“ By fancie once distressed: &c.

“ And so sing I, with *downe a-downe,*” &c.

Down a-down is likewise the burthen of a song in *The Three Ladies*
of London, 1584, and perhaps common to many others.

STEEVENS.

See Florio's Italian Dictionary, 1598: “ *Filibustacchina*, The
 burden of a countrie song; as we say, *Hay doune a doune, donna.*”

MALONE.

³ *O, how the wheel becomes it! &c.*] The story alluded to I do not
 know; but perhaps the lady stolen by the steward was reduced to
 spin. JOHNSON.

The *wheel* may mean no more than *the burthen of the song*, which
 she had just repeated, and as such was formerly used. I met with
 the following observation in an old quarto black-letter book, pub-
 lished before the time of Shakspeare:

“ The song was accounted a good one, thogh it was not moche
 graced by the *wheele*, which in no wise accorded with the subject
 matter thereof.”

is the false steward, that stole his master's daughter.

LAER. This nothing's more than matter.

I quote this from memory, and from a book, of which I cannot recollect the exact title or date; but the passage was in a preface to some songs or sonnets. I well remember, to have met with the word in the same sense in other old books.

Rota, indeed, as I am informed, is the ancient musical term in Latin, for the burden of a song. Dr. Farmer, however, has just favoured me with a quotation from Nicholas Breton's *Types of an idle Head*, 1577, which at once explains the word *wheel* in the sense for which I have contended:

“ That I may sing, full merrily,

“ Not heigh ho *wale*, but care away!”

i. e. not with a melancholy, but a cheerful burthen.

I formerly supposed that the ballad, alluded to by Ophelia, was that entered on the books of the Stationers' Company; “ October 1580. Four ballades of the Lord of Lorn and the *False Steward*,” &c. but Mr. Ritson assures me there is no corresponding *libel* in it.

STEEVENS.

I am inclined to think that *wheel* is here used in its ordinary sense, and that these words allude to the occupation of the girl who is supposed to sing the song alluded to by Ophelia.—The following lines in Hall's *Virgidemiarum*, 1597, appear to me to add some support to this interpretation:

“ Some drunken rimer thinks his time well spent,

“ If he can live to see his name in print;

“ Who when he is once fleshed to the presse,

“ And sees his handselle have such fair successe,

“ *Sung to the wheele*, and sung unto the payle,

“ He sends forth thraves of *ballads* to the sale.”

So, in Sir Thomas Overbury's *Characters*, 1614: “ She makes her hands hard with labour, and her head soft with pittie; and when winter evenings fall early, sitting at her merry *wheele*, she sings a defiance to the giddy wheele of fortune.”

Our author likewise furnishes an authority to the same purpose. *Twelfth Night*, Act II. sc. iv:

“ — Come, the *song* we had last night:

“ The *spinsters*, and the knitters in the sun,

“ Do use to *chaunt* it.”

A musical antiquary may perhaps contend, that the controverted words of the text allude to an ancient instrument mentioned by Chaucer, and called by him a *rote*, by others a *vielle*; which was played upon by the friction of a *wheel*. MALONE.

OPH. There's rosemary, that's for remembrance;
pray you, love, remember: and there is pansies,
that's for thoughts.⁴

⁴ *There's rosemary, that's for remembrance;—and there is pansies, that's for thoughts.*] There is probably some mythology in the choice of these herbs, but I cannot explain it. *Pansies* is for *thoughts*, because of its name, *Pensées*; but why *rosemary* indicates *remembrance*, except that it is an ever-green, and carried at funerals, I have not discovered. JOHNSON.

So, in *All Fools*, a comedy, by Chapman, 1605:

“What flowers are these?
“The *pansie* this.
“O, that's for lovers' *thoughts*!”

Rosemary was anciently supposed to strengthen the memory, and was not only carried at funerals, but worn at weddings, as appears from a passage in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Elder Brother*, Act III. sc. iii.

And from another in *Ram-Alley, or Merry-Tricks*, 1611:

“—— will I be *wed* this morning,
“Thou shalt not be there, nor once be graced with
“A piece of *rosemary*.”

Again, in *The Noble Spanijsh Soldier*, 1634: “I meet few but are stuck with *rosemary*: every one asked me who was to be married.”

Again, in Greene's *Never too late*, 1616: “—— she hath given thee a nosegay of flowers, wherein, as a top-gallant for all the rest, is set in *rosemary* for remembrance.”

Again, in *A Dialogue between Nature and the Phoenix*, by R. Chester, 1601:

“There's *rosemarie*; the Arabians justify
“*(Physitions of exceeding perfect skill)*
“It comforteth the braine and *memorie*,” &c. STEEVENS.

Rosemary being supposed to strengthen the memory, was the emblem of fidelity in lovers. So, in *A Handfull of Pleasant Delites, containing sundrie new Sonets*, 16mo. 1584:

“*Rosemary* is for remembrance
“Betweene us daie and night;
“Wishing that I might alwaies have
“You present in my sight.”

The poem in which these lines are found, is entitled *A Noſtgaie alwaies ſweet for Lovers to ſend for Tokens of love*, &c. MALONE.

LÆR. A document in madness; thoughts and remembrance fitted.

OPH. There's fennel for you, and columbines:³
—there's rue for you; and here's some for me:—

³ *There's fennel for you, and columbines:]* Greene, in his *Quip for an Upstart Courtier*, 1620, calls *fennel*, *women's weeds*: “fit generally for that sex, sith while they are maidens, they wish wantonly.”

Among *Turbervile's Epitaphes*, &c. p. 42, b. I likewise find the following mention of *fennel*:

“Your *fenell* did declare
“ (As simple men can shewe)
“ That flattrie in my breast I bare,
“ Where friendship ought to grow.”

I know not of what *columbines* were supposed to be emblematical. They are again mentioned in *All Fools*, by Chapman, 1605:

“What's that?—a *columbine*?
“ No: that *thankless* flower grows not in my garden.”

Gerard, however, and other herbalists, impute few, if any, virtues to them; and they may therefore be styled *thankless*, because they appear to make no grateful return for their creation.

Again, in the 15th Song of Drayton's *Polyolbion*:

“The *columbine* amongst, they sparingly do set.”

From the *Caliba Poetarum*, 1599, it should seem as if this flower was the emblem of cuckoldom:

“—the blue *cornuted* columbine,
“ Like to the crooked horns of Acheloy.” STEEVENS.

Columbine was an emblem of cuckoldom, on account of the horns of its nectaria, which are remarkable in this plant. See *Aquilegia*, in Linnæus's *Genera*, 684. S. W.

The columbine was emblematical of forsaken lovers:

“The *columbine* in tawny often taken,
“ Is then ascribed to such as are forsaken.”

Browne's *Britannia's Pastorals*, Book I. Song ii. 1613.
HOLT WHITE.

Ophelia gives her fennel and columbines to the king. In the collection of Sonnets quoted above, the former is thus mentioned:

“*Fennel* is for flatterers,
“ An evil thing 'tis sure;
“ But I have alwaies meant truly,
“ With constant heart most pure.”

See also Florio's Italian Dictionary, 1598: “*Dare finocchio*, to give *fennel*,—to flatter, to dissemble.” MALONE.

we may call it, herb of grace o'sundays:⁶—you

⁶ — *there's rue for you; and here's some for me:—we may call it, herb of grace o'sundays: &c.* I believe there is a quibble meant in this passage; *rue* anciently signifying the same as *Ruth*, i. e. sorrow. Ophelia gives the Queen some, and keeps a proportion of it for herself. There is the same kind of play with the same word in *King Richard II.*

Herb of grace is one of the titles which *Tucca* gives to *William Rufus*, in Decker's *Satiromastix*. I suppose the first syllable of the surname *Rufus* introduced the quibble.

In *Doctor Do-good's Directions*, an ancient ballad, is the same allusion:

- “ If a man have light fingers that he cannot charme,
- “ Which will pick men's pockets, and do such like harme,
- “ He must be let blood, in a scarfe weare his arme,
- “ And drink the *herb grace* in a posset luke-warme.”

STEVENS.

The following passage from Greene's *Quip for an Upstart Courtier*, will furnish the best reason for calling *rue* herb of grace o'sundays: “ — some of them smil'd and said, *Rue* was called *Herbegrace*, which though they scorned in their youth, they might wear in their age, and that it was never too late to say *miserere*.”

HENLEY.

Herb of grace was not the *sunday name*, but the *every day name* of *rue*. In the common dictionaries of Shakspeare's time it is called *herb of grace*. See Florio's Italian Dictionary, 1598, in v. *ruta*, and Cotgrave's French Dictionary, 1611, in v. *rue*. There is no ground therefore for supposing, with Dr. Warburton, that *rue* was called herb of grace, from its being used in exorcisms performed in churches on Sundays.

Ophelia only means, I think, that the queen may with peculiar propriety on *Sundays*, when she solicits pardon for that crime which she has so much occasion to *rue* and repent of, call her *rue*, *herb of grace*. So, in *King Richard II.*:

- “ Here did she drop a tear; here in this place
- “ I'll set a bank of *rue*, four *herb of grace*.
- “ *Rue*, even for *ruth*, here shortly shall be seen,
- “ In the remembrance of a weeping queen.”

Ophelia, after having given the queen *rue* to remind her of the sorrow and contrition she ought to feel for her incestuous marriage, tells her, she may wear it with a *difference*, to distinguish it from that worn by Ophelia herself; because her tears flowed from the loss of a father, those of the queen ought to flow for her guilt.”

MALONE.

may wear your rue with a difference.⁷—There's a daisy:⁸—I would give you some violets; but they wither'd all, when my father died:⁹—They say, he made a good end,—

*For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy,*²—

[Sings.

⁷ — *you may wear your rue with a difference.*] This seems to refer to the rules of heraldry, where the younger brothers of a family bear the same arms *with a difference*, or mark of distinction. So, in Holinshed's *Reign of King Richard II.* p. 443: “—because he was the youngest of the Spenfers, he bare a border gules for a difference.”

There may, however, be somewhat more implied here than is expressed. *You, madam,* (says Ophelia to the Queen,) *may call your RUE by its Sunday name, HERB OF GRACE, and so wear it with a difference to distinguish it from mine, which can never be any thing but merely RUE, i. e. sorrow.* STEEVENS.

⁸ *There's a daisy:*] Greene, in his *Quip for an Upstart Courtier*, has explained the significance of this flower: “—Next them grew the DISSEMBLING DAISIE, to warne such light-of-love wenches not to trust every faire promise that such amorous bachelors make them.” HENLEY.

⁹ *I would give you some violets; but they wither'd all, when my father died:*] The violet is thus characterized in the old collection of Sonnets above quoted, printed in 1584:

“Violet is for faithfulnesse,

“Which in me shall abide;

“Hoping likewise that from your heart

“You will not let it slide.” MALONE.

² *For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy,*] This is part of an old song, mentioned likewise by Beaumont and Fletcher, in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, Act IV. sc. 1:

“—I can sing the broom,

“And Bonny Robin.”

In the books of the Stationers' Company, 26 April, 1594, is entered “A ballad, intituled, A doleful adewe to the last Erle of Darbie, to the tune of *Bonny sweet Robin.*” STEEVENS.

The “Courtly new ballad of the princely wooing of the faire maid of London, by King Edward,” is also “to the tune of *Bonny sweet Robin.*” RITSON.

PRINCE OF DENMARK. 279

LAER. Thought and affliction,³ passion, hell it-
self,
She turns to favour, and to prettiness.

OPH. *And will he not come again?* [Sings.
And will he not come again?
No, no, he is dead,
Go to thy death-bed,
He never will come again.

His beard was as white as snow,⁴
All flaxen was his poll:
He is gone, he is gone,
And we cast away moan;
God 'a mercy on his soul!

And of all christian souls! I pray God. God be
wi' you! [Exit OPHELIA.

LAER. Do you see this, O God?

³ Thought and affliction,] *Thought* here, as in many other places, signifies melancholy. See Vol. XII. p. 570, n. 7. MALONE.

⁴ *His beard was as white as snow, &c.*] This, and several circumstances in the character of Ophelia, seem to have been ridiculed in *Eastward Hoe*, a comedy, written by Ben Jonson, Chapman, and Marston, printed in 1605, Act III:

“ His head as white as milk,
“ All flaxen was his hair;
“ But now he's dead,
“ And laid in his bed,
“ And never will come again,
“ God be at your labour!” STEEVENS.

⁵ *God 'a mercy on his soul!*

And of all christian souls!] This is the common conclusion to many of the ancient monumental inscriptions. See Weever's *Funeral Monuments*, p. 657, 658. Berthelette, the publisher of Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, 1554, speaking first of the funeral of Chaucer, and then of Gower, says: “ — he lieth buried in the monasterie of Seynt Peter's at Westminster, &c. *On whose soules and all christen, Jesu have mercie.*” STEEVENS.

KING. Laertes, I must commune with your grief,⁶
 Or you deny me right. Go but apart,
 Make choice of whom your wisest friends you will,
 And they shall hear and judge 'twixt you and me:
 If by direct or by collateral hand
 They find us touch'd, we will our kingdom give,
 Our crown, our life, and all that we call ours,
 To you in satisfaction; but, if not,
 Be you content to lend your patience to us,
 And we shall jointly labour with your soul
 To give it due content.

LAER. Let this be so;
 His means of death, his obscure funeral,—
 No trophy, sword, nor hatchment, o'er his bones,⁷
 No noble rite, nor formal ostentation,—
 Cry to be heard, as 'twere from heaven to earth,
 That I must call't in question.

KING. So you shall;
 And, where the offence is, let the great axe fall.
 I pray you, go with me. [Exit.

⁶ — commune *with your grief*,] The folio reads—*common*, To *common* is to *commune*. This word, pronounced as anciently spelt, is still in frequent provincial use. So, in *The last Voyage of Captaine Frobiſher*, by Dionyse Settle, 12mo. bl. l. 1577: "Our Generall repayred with the ship boat to *common* or sign with them." Again, in Holinshed's account of Jack Cade's insurrection:—" — to whome were sent from the king the archbishop &c. to *common* with him of his griefs and requests," STEEVENS.

⁷ *No trophy, sword, nor hatchment, o'er his bones*,] It was the custom, in the times of our author, to hang a sword over the grave of a knight. JOHNSON.

This practice is uniformly kept up to this day. Not only the sword, but the helmet, gauntlet, spurs, and tabard (i. e. a coat whereon the armorial ensigns were anciently depicted, from whence the term *coat of armour*) are hung over the grave of every knight.

SIR J. HAWKINS;

PRINCE OF DENMARK. 281

SCENE IV.

Another Room in the same.

Enter HORATIO, and a Servant.

HOR. What are they, that would speak with me?

SERV. Sailors, sir;

They say, they have letters for you.

HOR. Let them come in.—

[*Exit Servant.*]

I do not know from what part of the world
I should be greeted, if not from lord Hamlet.

Enter Sailors.

I. SAIL. God blefs you, fir.

HOR. Let him blefs thee too.

I. SAIL. He shall fir, an't please him. There's
a letter for you, fir; it comes from the ambassador
that was bound for England; if your name be Ho-
ratio, as I am let to know it is.

HOR. [*Reads.*] Horatio, *when thou shalt have
overlook'd this, give these fellows some means to the
king; they have letters for him. Ere we were two
days old at sea, a pirate of very warlike appointment
gave us chase: Finding ourselves too slow of sail, we
put on a compell'd valour; and in the grapple I
boarded them: on the instant, they got clear of our
ship; so I alone became their prisoner. They have
dealt with me, like thieves of mercy; but they knew
what they did; I am to do a good turn for them. Let
the king have the letters I have sent; and repair thou
to me with as much haste as thou would'st fly death. I*

have words to speak in thine ear, will make thee dumb; yet are they much too light for the bore of the matter. These good fellows will bring thee where I am. Rosen- crantz and Guildenstern bold their course for England: of them I have much to tell thee. Farewell.*

He that thou knowest thine, Hamlet.

Come, I will give you way for these your letters;
And do't the speedier, that you may direct me
To him from whom you brought them. [*Exeunt.*

S C E N E VII.

Another Room in the same.

Enter KING and LAERTES.

KING. Now must your conscience my acquittance
 seal,
And you must put me in your heart for friend;
Sith you have heard, and with a knowing ear,
That he, which hath your noble father slain,
Pursu'd my life.

LAER. It well appears:—But tell me,
Why you proceeded not against these feats,
So crimeful and so capital in nature,
As by your safety, greatness, wisdom, all things else,
You mainly were stirr'd up.

KING. O, for two special reasons;
Which may to you, perhaps, seem much unfinew'd,
But yet to me they are strong. The queen, his
 mother,

* ——— *for the bore of the matter.*] The bore is the caliber of a gun, or the capacity of the barrel. The matter (says Hamlet) would carry heavier words. JOHNSON.

Lives almost by his looks ; and for myself,
(My virtue, or my plague, be it either which,) She is so conjunctive to my life and soul,
That, as the star moves not but in his sphere,
I could not but by her. The other motive,
Why to a publick count I might not go,
Is, the great love the general gender⁹ bear him :
Who, dipping all his faults in their affection,
Work like the spring² that turneth wood to stone,
Convert his gyves to graces ; so that my arrows,
Too slightly timber'd for so loud a wind,³
Would have reverted to my bow again,
And not where I had aim'd them.

⁹ — *the general gender*—] The common race of the people.

JOHNSON.

² Work like the spring &c.] This simile is neither very seasonable in the deep interest of this conversation, nor very accurately applied. If the *spring* had changed base metals to gold, the thought had been more proper. JOHNSON.

The folio, instead of—*work*, reads—*would*.

The same comparison occurs in Churchyard's *Choice* :

" So there is wood that water turns to stones."

In Thomas Lupton's *Third Book of Notable Things*, 4to. bl. 1. there is also mention of " a well, that whatsoever is throwne into the same, is turned into a stone." STEEVENS.

The allusion here is to the qualities still ascribed to the dropping well at Knaresborough in Yorkshire. Camden (edit. 1590, p. 564,) thus mentions it : " Sub quo fons est in quem ex impendentibus rupibus aquæ guttatim distillant, unde DROPPING WELL vocant, in quem quicquid ligni immittitur, lapideo cortice brevi obduci & lapidescere observatum est." REED.

³ — *for so loud a wind*,] Thus the folio. The quarto, 1604, reads—*for so loved arm'd*. If these words have any meaning, it should seem to be—The instruments of offence I employ, would have proved too weak to injure one who is so loved and arm'd by the affection of the people. Their love, like *armour*, would revert the arrow to the bow. STEEVENS.

Loved arm'd is as extraordinary a corruption as any that is found in these plays. MALONE.

LAR. And so have I a noble father lost;
A sister driven into desperate terms;
Whose worth, if praises may go back again,⁴
Stood challenger on mount of all the age
For her perfections:—But my revenge will ~~come~~.

KING. Break not your sleeps for that: ~~you will~~
not think,
That we are made of stuff so flat and dull,
That we can let our beard be shook with danger,⁵
And think it pastime. You shortly shall ~~hear~~
more:

I lov'd your father, and we love ourself;
And that, I hope, will teach you to imagine,—
How now? what news?⁶

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. Letters, my lord, from Hamlet:⁷
This to your majesty; this to the queen.

KING. From Hamlet! Who brought them?

Mess. Sailors, my lord, they say: I saw them ~~not~~;
They were given me by Claudio, he receiv'd them
Of him that brought them.⁸

KING. Laertes you shall hear them:—
Leave us. [Exit Messenger.]

⁴ — *if praises may go back again,*] If I may praise what has been, but is now to be found no more. JOHNSON.

⁵ *That we can let our beard be shook with danger,*] It is wonderful that none of the advocates for the learning of Shakspeare have told us that this line is imitated from Persius, Sat. ii:

“ Idcirco stolidam præbet tibi vellere barbam

“ Jupiter?” STEEVENS.

⁶ *How now? &c.*] Omitted in the quartos. THEOBALD.

⁷ *Letters, &c.*] Omitted in the quartos. STEEVENS.

⁸ *Of him that brought them.*] I have restored this hemistich from the quartos. STEEVENS.

PRINCE OF DENMARK. 185

[Reads.] *High and mighty, you shall know, I am set naked on your kingdom. To-morrow shall I beg leave to see your kingly eyes : when I shall, first asking your pardon thereunto, recount the occasion of my sudden and more strange return.*

Hamlet.

What should this mean? Are all the rest come back?
Or is it some abuse, and no such thing?

LAER. Know you the hand?

KING. 'Tis Hamlet's character. *Naked,—*
And, in a postscript here, he says, *alone* :
Can you advise me?

LAER. I am lost in it, my lord. But let him
come ;

It warms the very sickness in my heart,
That I shall live and tell him to his teeth,
Thus diddest thou.

KING. If it be so, Laertes,—
As how should it be so?—how otherwise?—
Will you be rul'd by me?

LAER. Ay, my lord ;
So you will not o'er-rule me to a peace.

KING. To thine own peace. If he be now re-
turn'd,—

As checking at his voyage,⁹ and that he means

⁹ *As checking at his voyage,*] The phrase is from falconry ; and may be justified from the following passage in Hinde's *Eliaſto Libidinoſo*, 1606 : “ — For who knows not, quoth ſhe, that this hawk, which comes now ſo fair to the fiſt, may to-morrow *check* at the lure ? ”

Again, in G. Whetſtone's *Caſtle of Delight*, 1576 :

“ But as the hawke, to gad which knowes the way,

“ Will hardly leave to *checke* at carren crows,” &c.

STEEVENſ.

As checking at his voyage,] Thus the folio. The quarto, 1604. exhibits a corruption ſimilar to that mentioned in n. 3, p. 283. It reads :—As *the king* at his voyage. MALONE.

No more to undertake it,—I will work him
To an exploit, now ripe in my device,
Under the which he shall not choose but fall :
And for his death no wind of blame shall breathe;
But even his mother shall uncharge the practice,
And call it, accident.

*LAER.*² My lord, I will be rul'd ;
The rather, if you could devise it so,
That I might be the organ.

KING. It falls right.
You have been talk'd of since your travel much,
And that in Hamlet's hearing, for a quality
Wherein, they say, you shine : your sum of parts
Did not together pluck such envy from him,
As did that one ; and that, in my regard,
Of the unworthiest siege.³

LAER. What part is that, my lord?

KING. A very ribband in the cap of youth,
Yet needful too ; for youth no less becomes
The light and careless livery that it wears,
Than settled age his fables, and his weeds,
Importing health and graveness.⁴—Two months
since,

² *Laer.* &c.] The next sixteen lines are omitted in the folio.

STEEVENS.

³ *Of the unworthiest siege.*] Of the lowest rank. *Siege*, for *seat*,
place. JOHNSON.

So, in *Othello*:

“ ——— I fetch my birth

“ From men of royal *siege*.” STEEVENS.

⁴ *Importing health and graveness.*] *Importing* here may be, not
inferring by logical consequence, but *producing* by physical effect.
A young man regards show in his dress, an old man, *bealib*.

JOHNSON.

Importing health, I apprehend, means, *denoting an attention to*
bealib. MALONE.

Here was a gentleman of Normandy,—
I have seen myself, and serv'd against, the French,
And they can well on horseback: but this gallant
Had witchcraft in't; he grew unto his seat;
And to such wond'rous doing brought his horse,
As he had been incorp'd and demi-natur'd
With the brave beast:⁵ so far he topp'd my thought,
That I, in forgery of shapes and tricks,⁶
Come short of what he did.

LAER. A Norman, was't?

KING. A Norman.

LAER. Upon my life, Lamord.⁷

KING. The very fame.

LAER. I know him well: he is the brooch, indeed,

And gem of all the nation.

KING. He made confession of you;
And gave you such a masterly report,
For art and exercise in your defence,⁸
And for your rapier most especial,
That he cried out, 'twould be a fight indeed,

Importing may only signify—*implying, denoting*. So, in *King Henry VI.* Part I:

“Comets, *importing* change of times and states.”

Mr. Malone's explanation, however, may be the true one.

STEEVENS.

⁵ *As he had been incorp'd and demi-natur'd*

With the brave beast:] This is from Sidney's *Arcadia*, B. II:

“As if, Centaur-like, he had been one peece with the horse.”

STEEVENS.

⁶ — *in forgery of shapes and tricks,*] I could not contrive so many proofs of dexterity as he could perform. JOHNSON.

⁷ *Lamord.*] Thus the quarto, 1604. Shakspeare, I suspect, wrote *Lamode*. See the next speech but one. The folio has—*Lamond*. MALONE.

⁸ — *in your defence,*] That is, in the *science* of defence.

JOHNSON.

If one could match you : the scrimers⁹ of their nation,

He swore, had neither motion, guard, nor eye,
If you oppos'd them : Sir, this report of his
Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy,
That he could nothing do, but wish and beg
Your sudden coming o'er, to play with you.
Now, out of this,—

LAER. What out of this, my lord?

KING. Laertes, was your father dear to you?
Or are you like the painting of a sorrow,
A face without a heart?

LAER. Why ask you this?

KING. Not that I think, you did not love your father ;

But that I know, love is begun by time ;²
And that I see, in passages of proof,³
Time qualifies the spark and fire of it.
There lives⁴ within the very flame of love

⁹ — *the scrimers*—] *The fencers.* JOHNSON.

From *escrimeur*, Fr. a fencer. MALONE.

This unfavourable description of the French swordsmen is not in the folio. STEEVENS.

² — *love is begun by time* ;] This is obscure. The meaning may be, *love* is not innate in us, and co-essential to our nature, but begins at a certain time from some external cause, and being always subject to the operations of time, suffers change and diminution.

JOHNSON.

The king reasons thus :—" I do not suspect that you did not love your father ; but I know that time abates the force of affection." I therefore suspect that we ought to read :

— *love is begun by time* ;

I suppose that Shakspeare places the syllable *be* before *gone*, as we say *be*-paint, *be*-spatter, *be*-think, &c. M. MASON.

³ — *passages of proof*,] In transactions of daily experience.

JOHNSON.

⁴ *There lives* &c.] The next ten lines are not in the folio.

STEEVENS.

A kind of wick, or snuff, that will abate it;
And nothing is at a like goodness still;
For goodness, growing to a plurify,^s
Dies in his own too-much: That we would do,
We should do when we would; for this *would*
changes,
And hath abatements and delays as many,

^s For goodness, growing to a plurify,] I would believe, for the honour of Shakspeare, that he wrote *pletbory*. But I observe the dramattick writers of that time frequently call a fullness of blood a *plurify*, as if it came, not from *πληρῆς*, but from *πλῆς*, *pluris*.

WARBURTON.

I think the word should be spelt—*plurify*. This passage is fully explained by one in Maschal's treatise on cattle, 1662, p. 187: "Against the blood, or *plurifie* of blood. The disease of blood is, some young horses will feed, and being fat will *increase* blood, and so *grow* to a *plurifie*, and *die* thereof if he have not soon help."

TOLLET.

We should certainly read *plurify*, as Tollet observes. Thus, in Massinger's *Unnatural Combat*, Malefort says

" ——— in a word,

" Thy *plurify* of goodness is thy ill."

And again, in *The Picture*, Sophia says:

" A *plurify* of blood you may let out," &c.

The word also occurs in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. Arcite, in his invocation to Mars, says:

" ——— that heal't with blood

" The earth, when it is sick, and cur't the world

" Of the *plurify* of people!" M. MASON.

Dr. Warburton is right. The word is spelt *plurify* in the quarto, 1604, and is used in the same sense as here, in *'Tis Pity she's a Whore*, by Ford, 1633:

" Must your hot itch and *plurifie* of lust,

" The hey-day of your luxury, be fed

" Up to a surfeit?" MALONE.

Mr. Pope introduced this simile in the *Essay on Criticism*, v. 303:

" For works may have more wit than does them good,

" As bodies perish through excess of blood."

Ascham has a thought very similar to Pope's: "Twenty to one, offend more, in writing to much, then to litle: *even as twenty, fall into sickness, rather by over much fulnes, then by any lacke or emptinesse.*" *The Schole-Master*, 4to. bl. l. fol. 43. HOLT WHITE.

As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents;
And then this *should* is like a spendthrift sigh,
That hurts by easing.⁶ But, to the quick o'the
ulcer:

⁶ *And then this should is like a spendthrift sigh,
That hurts by easing.*] A *spendthrift sigh* is a *sigh* that makes an
unnecessary waste of the vital flame. It is a notion very prevalent,
that *sighs* impair the strength, and wear out the animal powers.

JOHNSON.

So, in the *Governall of Helthe* &c. printed by Wynkyn de Worde:
“And for why whan a man casteth out that noble humour too
moche, he is hugely dyscolored, and his body moche febled, more
then he lete four *syttes*, soo moche blode oute of his body.”

STEEVENS.

Hence they are called, in *King Henry VI.*—blood-consuming
sighs. Again, in *Pericles*, 1609:

“Do not consume your blood with sorrowing.”

The idea is enlarged upon in Fenton's *Tragical Discourses*, 1579:
“Why staye you not in tyme the source of your scorching *sighes*,
that have already drayned your body of his wholesome humours,
appoynted by nature to gyve sucke to the entrals and inward parts
of you?”

The original quarto, as well as the folio, reads—a *spendthrift's*
sigh; but I have no doubt that it was a corruption, arising from the
first letter of the following word *sigh*, being an *s*. I have there-
fore, with the other modern editors, printed—*spendthrift sigh*, fol-
lowing a late quarto, (which however is of no authority,) printed
in 1611. That a *sigh*, if it consumes the blood, *hurts us by easing*,
or is prejudicial to us on the whole, though it affords a
temporary relief, is sufficiently clear: but the former part of the
line, *and then this should*, may require a little explanation. I sup-
pose the king means to say, that if we do not promptly execute
what we are convinced we *should* or ought to do, we shall after-
wards in vain repent our not having seized the fortunate moment for
action: and this opportunity which we have let go by us, and the
reflection that we *should* have done that, which, from supervening
accidents, it is no longer in our power to do, is as prejudicial and
painful to us as a blood-consuming *sigh*, that at once hurts and
eases us.

I apprehend the poet meant to compare such a conduct, and the
consequent reflection, *only* to the *pernicious* quality which he sup-
posed to be annexed to *sighing*, and not to the temporary ease which
it affords. His similes, as I have frequently had occasion to ob-
serve, seldom run on four feet. MALONE.

PRINCE OF DENMARK. 291

Hamlet comes back ; What would you undertake,
To show yourself in deed your father's son
More than in words ?

LAER. To cut his throat i'the church.

KING. No place, indeed, should murder sanctua-
rize ;

Revenge should have no bounds. But, good La-
ertes,

Will you do this, keep close within your chamber :
Hamlet, return'd, shall know you are come home :
We'll put on those shall praise your excellence,
And set a double varnish on the fame
The Frenchman gave you ; bring you, in fine, to-
gether,

And wager o'er your heads : he, being remiss,¹
Most generous, and free from all contriving,
Will not peruse the foils ; so that, with ease,
Or with a little shuffling, you may choose
A sword unbated,² and, in a pass of practice,³

¹ — *be, being remiss,*] He being not vigilant or cautious.

JOHNSON.

² *A sword unbated,*] i. e. not blunted as foils are. Or, as one
edition has it, *embaited* or *envenomed*. POPE.

There is no such reading as *embaited* in any edition. In Sir
Thomas North's translation of Plutarch, it is said of one of the
Metelli, that " he shewed the people the cruel fight of fencers, at
unrebated swords." STEVENS.

Not blunted, as foils are by a button fixed to the end. So, in
Love's Labour's Lost :

" That honour, which shall *bate* his scythe's keen edge."

MALONE.

³ — *a pass of practice,*] Practice is often by Shakspeare, and
other writers, taken for an *insidious stratagem*, or *privy treason*,
a sense not incongruous to this passage, where yet I rather be-
lieve, that nothing more is meant than a *thrust for exercise*.

JOHNSON.

So, in *Look about you*, 1600 :

" I pray God there be no *practice* in this change."

Requite him for your father.

LAER. I will do't:
And, for the purpose, I'll anoint my sword.
I bought an unction of a mountebank,
So mortal, that, but dip a knife in it,
Where it draws blood, no cataplasm so rare,
Collected from all simples that have virtue
Under the moon, can save the thing from death,
That is but scratch'd withal: I'll touch my point
With this contagion; that, if I gall him slightly,
It may be death.²

KING. Let's further think of this;
Weigh, what convenience, both of time and means,
May fit us to our shape:³ if this should fail,
And that our drift look through our bad perform-
ance,

Again:

“ ——— the man is like to die:

“ *Practice*, by th' mass, *practice* by the &c.—

“ *Practice*, by the Lord, *practice*, I see it clear.”

Again, more appositely in our author's *Twelfth Night*, Act V.
sc. ult:

“ This *practice* hath most shrewdly *pass'd* upon thee.”

STEVENS.

A *pass* of *practice* is a favourite *pass*, one that Laertes was well
practised in.—In *Much Ado about Nothing*, Hero's father says:

“ I'll prove it on his body, if he dare,

“ Despite his nice fence, and his active *practice*.”

The treachery on this occasion, was his using a sword *unbated* and
envenomed. M. MASON.

² *It may be death.*] It is a matter of surprise, that no one of
Shakspeare's numerous and able commentators has remarked, with
proper warmth and detestation, the villainous assassin-like treachery
of Laertes in this horrid plot. There is the more occasion that he
should be here pointed out an object of abhorrence, as he is a cha-
racter we are, in some preceding parts of the play, led to respect
and admire. RITSON.

³ *May fit us to our shape:]* May enable us to assume proper cha-
racters, and to act our part. JOHNSON.

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'Twere better not assay'd ; therefore, this project
Should have a back, or second, that might hold,
If this should blast in proof.⁴ Soft ;—let me see :—
We'll make a solemn wager on your cunnings,—
I ha't :

When in your motion you are hot and dry,
(As make your bouts more violent to that end,)
And that he calls for drink, I'll have preferr'd
him⁵

A chalice for the nonce ; whereon but sipping,
If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,⁶
Our purpose may hold there. But stay, what noise ?'

⁴ — *blast in proof.*] This, I believe, is a metaphor taken from a mine, which, in the proof or execution, sometimes breaks out with an ineffectual *blast*. JOHNSON.

The word *proof* shows the metaphor to be taken from the trying or proving fire-arms or cannon, which often *blast* or *burst* in the *proof*. STEEVENS.

⁵ — *I'll have preferr'd him*—] i. e. presented to him. Thus the quarto, 1604. The word indeed is misspelt, *prefard*. The folio reads—I'll have *prepar'd* him. MALONE.

To *prefer* (as Mr. Malone observes) certainly means—to *present*, or *offer*. So, in *Timon of Athens* :

“ Why then *preferr'd* you not your fums and bills ?”

STEEVENS.

⁶ *If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,*] For *stuck*, read *tuck*, a common name for a rapier. BLACKSTONE.

Your venom'd *stuck* is, your venom'd thrust. *Stuck* was a term of the fencing-school. So, in *Twelfth Night* : “ — and he gives me the *stuck* with such a mortal motion,—.” Again, in *The Return from Parnassus*, 1606 : “ Here is a fellow, Judicio, that carried the deadly *stucke* in his pen.”—See Florio's Italian Dict. 1598 : “ *Stoccata*, a foyne, a thrust, a *stoccado* given in fence.”

MALONE.

See Vol. IV. p. 129, n. 6. STEEVENS.

⁷ — *But stay, what noise ?*] I have recovered this from the quartos. STEEVENS.

Enter Queen.

How now, sweet queen?⁸

QUEEN. One woe doth tread upon another's heel,⁹
So fast they follow:—Your sister's drown'd, Laertes.

LAER. Drown'd! O, where?

QUEEN. There is a willow grows ascaunt the
brook,¹

That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream;
Therewith fantastick garlands did she make
Of crow-flowers, nettles, daiesies, and long purples,¹

⁸ *How now, sweet queen?*] These words are not in the quarto. The word *now*, which appears to have been omitted by the carelessness of the transcriber or compositor, was supplied by the editor of the second folio. MALONE.

⁹ *One woe doth tread upon another's heel,*] A similar thought occurs in *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, 1609:

“ One sorrow never comes, but brings an heir,

“ That may succeed as his inheritor.” STEEVENS.

Again, in Drayton's *Mortimeriados*, 4to. 1596:

“ — miseries, which seldom come alone,

“ Thick on the neck one of another fell.”

Again, in Shakspeare's 131st Sonnet:

“ A thousand groans, but thinking on thy fall,

“ One on another's neck, —.” MALONE.

Again, in *Lochrine*, 1595:

“ One mischief follows on another's neck.”

And this also is the first line of a queen's speech on a lady's drowning herself. RITSON.

¹ — ascaunt the brook,] Thus the quartos. The folio reads—*aslant*. *Ascaunce* is interpreted in a note of Mr. Tyrwhitt's on Chaucer—*askew, aside, sideways*. STEEVENS.

¹ — and long purples,] By *long purples* is meant a plant, the modern botanical name of which is *orchis morio mas*, anciently *testiculus morionis*. The grosser name by which it passes, is sufficiently known in many parts of England, and particularly in the county where Shakspeare lived. Thus far Mr. Warner. Mr. Collins adds,

That liberal ⁴ shepherds give a grosser name,
 But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them:
 There on the pendant boughs her coronet weeds
 Clambering to hang, an envious sliwer broke;
 When down her weedy trophies, and herself,
 Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread
 wide;
 And, mermaid-like, a while they bore her up:
 Which time, she chanted snatches of old tunes;⁵
 As one incapable of her own distress,⁶

that in Suffex it is still called *dead men's bands*; and that in Lyte's *Herbal*, 1578, its various names, too gross for repetition, are preserved.

Dead men's thumbs are mentioned in an ancient bl. l. ballad, entitled *The deceased Maiden Lover*:

"Then round the meddowes did she walke,
 "Catching each flower by the stalke,
 "Such as within the meddowes grew;
 "As *dead mans thumbe*, and hare-bell blew." STEEVENS.

One of the grosser names of this plant Gertrude had a particular reason to avoid:—*the rampant widow*. MALONE.

⁴ — liberal —] *Licentious*. See Vol. III, p. 242, n. 9; Vol. IV. p. 500, n. 4; Vol. V. p. 363, n. 6, and p. 436, n. 3.
 REED.

Liberal is free-spoken, licentious in language. So, in *Osibello*:
 "Is he not a most profane and *liberal* counsellor?" Again, in
A Woman's a Weathercock, by N. Field, 1612:

"——— Next that, the same
 "Of your neglect, and *liberal*-talking tongue,
 "Which breeds my honour an eternal wrong," MALONE.

⁵ Which time, she chanted snatches of old tunes;] Fletcher, in his *Scornful Lady*, very invidiously ridicules this incident:

"I will run mad first, and if that get not pity,
 "I'll drown myself to a most dismal ditty."
 WARBURTON.

The quartos read—snatches of old *lands*, i. e. *hymns*.

STEEVENS.

⁶ As one incapable of her own distress;] As one having no understanding or knowledge of her danger. See p. 233, n. 9.

MALONE.

That is, insensible. So, in *King Richard III*:

"Incapable and shallow innocents." RITSON.

Or like a creature native and indu'd
 Unto that element:⁷ but long it could not be,
 Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
 Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay
 To muddy death.⁸

LÆR. Alas then, she is drown'd?

QUEEN. Drown'd, drown'd.

LÆR. Too much of water hast thou, poor
 Ophelia,
 And therefore I forbid my tears: But yet
 It is our trick; nature her custom holds,
 Let shame say what it will: when these are gone,
 The woman will be out.⁹—Adieu, my lord!

⁷ *Or like a creature native and indu'd*

Unto that element:] I do not think the word *indued* is sense in this place; and believe we should read *inured*.

Shakspeare seems to have forgot himself in this scene, as there is not a single circumstance in the relation of Ophelia's death, that induces us to think she had drowned herself intentionally.

M. MASOX.

As we are indued with certain original dispositions and propensities at our birth, Shakspeare here uses *indued* with great licentiousness, for formed by nature; clothed, endowed, or furnished, with properties suited to the element of water.

Our old writers used *indued* and *endowed* indiscriminately. "To indue," says Minsheu in his Dictionary, "*sepissime refertur ad dotes animo infusas, quibus nimirum ingenium alicujus imbutum et initiatum est, unde et G. instruere est. L. imbuere. Imbuere proprie est inchoare et initiari.*"

In Cotgrave's French Dictionary, 1611, *instruire* is interpreted, "to fashion, to furnish with." *MALONE.*

⁸ *To muddy death.]* In the first scene of the next act we find Ophelia buried with such rites as betoken she *foredid her own life*. It should be remembered, that the account here given, is that of a friend; and that the queen could not possibly know what passed in the mind of Ophelia, when she placed herself in so perilous a situation. After the facts had been weighed and considered, the priest in the next act pronounces, that *her death was doubtful*. *MALONE.*

⁹ *The woman will be out.]* i. e. tears will flow. So, in *K. Henry V.*

"And all *the woman* came into my eyes." *MALONE.*

See Vol. IX. p. 450, n. 7. *STEEVENS.*

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I have a speech of fire, that fain would blaze,
But that this folly drowns it.² [Exit.

KING. Let's follow, Gertrude;
How much I had to do to calm his rage!
Now fear I, this will give it start again;
Therefore, let's follow. [Exeunt.

ACT V. SCENE I.

A Church-yard.

Enter two Clowns, with spades, &c.

1 CLO. Is she to be bury'd in christian burial,
that wilfully seeks her own salvation?

2. CLO. I tell thee, she is; therefore, make her
grave straight:³ the crowner hath set on her, and
finds it christian burial.

² *But that this folly drowns it.*] Thus the quarto, 1604. The folio reads—But that this folly *doubts* it, i. e. *douts*, or extinguishes it. See p. 63, n. 6. MALONE.

³ — *make her grave straight:*] Make her grave from east to west in a direct line parallel to the church; not from north to south, athwart the regular line. This, I think, is meant.

JOHNSON.

I cannot think that this means any more than *make her grave immediately*. She is to be buried in *christian burial*, and consequently the grave is to be made as usual. My interpretation may be justified from the following passages in *King Henry V.* and the play before us: "— We cannot lodge and board a dozen or fourteen gentlewomen who live by the prick of their needles, but it will be thought we keep a bawdy-house *straights*."

1. *CLO.* How can that be, unless she drown'd herself in her own defence?

2. *CLO.* Why, 'tis found so.

1. *CLO.* It must be *se offendendo*; it cannot be else. For here lies the point: If I drown myself wittingly, it argues an act: and an act hath three branches; it is, to act, to do, and to perform:⁴ Argal, she drown'd herself wittingly.

2. *CLO.* Nay, but hear you, goodman delver.

1. *CLO.* Give me leave. Here lies the water; good: here stands the man; good: If the man go to this water, and drown himself, it is, will he, nill he, he goes; mark you that: but if the water come to him, and drown him, he drowns not himself: Argal, he, that is not guilty of his own death, shortens not his own life.

2. *CLO.* But is this law?

1. *CLO.* Ay, marry is't; crowner's-quest law.'

Again, in *Hamlet*, Act III. sc. iv :

"Pol: He will come *straight*."

Again, in *The Lover's Progress*, by Beaumont and Fletcher :

"Lif. Do you fight *straight*?"

"Clar. Yes, presently."

Again, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* :

"—— we'll come and dress you *straight*."

Again, in *Othello* :

"Farewell, my Desdemona, I will come to thee *straight*."

STEEVEN.

Again, in *Troilus and Cressida* :

"Let us make ready *straight*." MALONE.

⁴ —— an act hath three branches; it is, to act, to do, and to perform:] Ridicule on scholastick divisions without distinction; and of distinctions without difference. WARBURTON.

⁵ —— crowner's quest-law.] I strongly suspect that this is a ridicule on the case of Dame Hales, reported by Plowden in his commentaries, as determined in 3 Eliz.

It seems, her husband sir James Hales had drowned himself in a river; and the question was, whether by this act a forfeiture of

2. *CLO.* Will you ha' the truth on't? If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been bury'd out of christian burial.

1. *CLO.* Why, there thou say'st: And the more pity; that great folks should have countenance in this world to drown or hang themselves, more than their even christian.⁶ Come; my spade. There

leave from the dean and chapter of Canterbury, which he was possessed of, did not accrue to the crown: an inquisition was found before the coroner, which found him *felo de se*. The legal and logical subtilties, arising in the course of the argument of this case, gave a very fair opportunity for a sneer at *crowner's quest-law*. The expression, a little before, that *an æt hath thre branches*, &c. is so pointed an allusion to the case I mention, that I cannot doubt but that Shakspeare was acquainted with, and meant to laugh at it.

It may be added, that on this occasion a great deal of subtilty was used, to ascertain whether sir James was the *agent* or the *patient*; or, in other words, whether *he went to the water, or the water came to him*. The cause of sir James's madness was the circumstance of his having been the judge who condemned *lady Jane Gray*. SIR J. HAWKINS.

If Shakspeare meant to allude to the case of Dame Hales, (which indeed seems not improbable,) he must have heard of that case in conversation; for it was determined before he was born, and Plowden's Commentaries, in which it is reported, were not translated into English till a few years ago. Our author's study was probably not much encumbered with old French Reports.

MALONE.

⁶ — *their even christian.*] So, all the old books, and rightly. An old English expression for fellow-christian. THIRLBY.

So, in Chaucer's *Jack Upland*: "If freres cannot or mow not excuse 'hem of these questions asked of 'hem, it seemeth that they be horrible giltye against God, and *ther even christian*;" &c.

Again, in Gower, *De Confessione Amantis*, Lib. V. fol. 102:

"Of beauteie sighe he never hir *even*."

Again, Chaucer's *Perfones Tale*: "—— of his neighbour, that is to sayn, of his *even cristen*," &c. This phrase also occurs frequently in the *Paston Letters*. See Vol. III. p. 421, &c. &c.

"That is to say, in relieving and sustenance of your *even cristen*," &c.—Again, "—— to dispose and help your *even cristen*."

STEVENS.

So, King Henry Eighth, in his answer to parliament in 1546:

is no ancient gentlemen but gardeners, ditchers, and grave-makers; they hold up Adam's profession.

2. *CLO.* Was he a gentleman?

1. *CLO.* He was the first that ever bore arms.

2. *CLO.*⁷ Why, he had none.

1. *CLO.* What, art a heathen? How dost thou understand the scripture? The scripture says, Adam digg'd; Could he dig without arms? I'll put another question to thee: if thou answer'st me not to the purpose, confess thyself—⁸

2. *CLO.* Go to.

1. *CLO.* What is he, that builds stronger than either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter?

2. *CLO.* The gallows-maker; for that frame outlives a thousand tenants.

1. *CLO.* I like thy wit well, in good faith; the gallows does well: But how does it well? it does well to those that do ill: now thou dost ill, to say, the gallows is built stronger than the church; argal, the gallows may do well to thee. To't again; come.

2. *CLO.* Who builds⁹ stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter?

" — you might say that I, being put in so speciall a trust as I am in this case, were no trustie frende to you, nor charitable man to mine *even christian*,—" Hall's Chronicle, fol. 261.

MALONE.

⁷ 2. *Clo.*] This speech, and the next as far as—*without arms*, is not in the quartos. STEEVENS.

⁸ — *confess thyself*—] *and be hang'd*, the Clown, I suppose, would have said, if he had not been interrupted. This was a common proverbial sentence. See *Othello*, Act IV. sc. i.—He might, however, have intended to say, *confess thyself an ass*.

MALONE.

⁹ *Who builds &c.*] The inquisitive reader may meet with an as-

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1. *CLO.* Ay, tell me that, and unyoke.^a

2. *CLO.* Marry, now I can tell.

1. *CLO.* To't.

2. *CLO.* Mafs, I cannot tell.

Enter HAMLET and HORATIO, at a distance.

1. *CLO.* Cudgel thy brains no more about it;^b for your dull afs will not mend his pace with beating: and, when you are ask'd this question next, say, a grave-maker; the houses that he makes, laft till doomsday. Go, get thee to Yaughan, and fetch me a stoup of liquor. [*Exit* 2. Clown.]

semblage of such queries (which perhaps composed the chief festivity of our ancestors by an evening fire) in a volume of very scarce tracts, preserved in the University Library at Cambridge, D. 5. 2. The innocence of these *Demaundes Joyous* may deserve a praise which is not always due to their delicacy. STEEVENS.

^a *Ay, tell me that, and unyoke.*] If it be not sufficient to say, with Dr. Warburton, that this phrase might be taken from husbandry, without much depth of reading, we may produce it from a dittie of the workmen of Dover, preserved in the additions to Holinshed, p. 1546:

“ My bow is broke, I would *unyoke*,

“ My foot is fore, I can worke no more.” FARMER.

Again, in Drayton's *Polyolbion*, at the end of Song I:

“ Here I'll *unyoke* a while and turne my steeds to meat.”

Again, in P. Holland's translation of Pliny's *Natural History*, p. 593: “ — in the evening, and when thou dost *unyoke*.”

STEEVENS.

^b *Cudgel thy brains no more about it;*] So, in *The Maydes Metamorphosis*, by Lyly, 1600:

“ In vain, I fear, *I beat my brains* about,

“ Proving by search to find my mistress out.” MALONE.

He digs, and sings.

*In youth when I did love, did love,⁴
 Metbought, it was very sweet,
 To contract, O, the time, for, ah, my bebove
 O, metbought, there was nothing meet.⁵*

⁴ *In youth when I did love, &c.*] The three stanzas, sung here by the grave-digger, are extracted, with a slight variation, from a little poem, called *The aged Lover renounceth Love*, written by Henry Howard, earl of Surrey, who flourished in the reign of king Henry VIII. and who was beheaded 1547, on a strained accusation of treason. THEOBALD.

⁵ *To contract, O, the time, for, ah, my bebove
 O, metbought, there was nothing meet.*] This passage, as it stands, is absolute nonsense; but if we read "for *aye*," instead of "for *ab*" it will have some kind of sense, as it may mean "that it was not meet, though he was in love, to contract himself *for ever*." M. MASON.

Dr. Percy is of opinion that the different corruptions in these stanzas, might have been "designed by the poet himself, the better to paint the character of an illiterate clown."

Behove is interest, convenience. So, in the 4th Book of Phæar's version of the *Æneid*:

"—— wilt for thyne own *bebove*." STEEVENS.

—— *nothing meet.*] Thus the folio. The quarto, 1604, reads:
O me thought there a was nothing a meet. MALONE.

The original poem from which this stanza is taken, like the other succeeding ones, is preserved among lord Surrey's poems; though, as Dr. Percy has observed, it is attributed to lord Vaux by George Gascoigne. See an epistle prefixed to one of his poems, printed with the rest of his works, 1575. By others it is supposed to have been written by sir Thomas Wyatt:

"I lothe that I did love;
 "In youth that I thought swete:
 "As time requires for my behove,
 "Methinks they are not mete."

All these difficulties however (says the Rev. Thomas Warton, *History of English Poetry*, Vol. III. p. 45,) are at once adjusted by MS. Harl. 1703, 25, in the British Museum, in which we have a copy of Vaux's poem, beginning, *I lothe that I did love*, with the

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HAM. Has this fellow no feeling of his business? he sings at grave-making.

HOR. Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.

HAM. 'Tis e'en so: the hand of little employment hath the daintier sense.

I. CLO. *But age, with his stealing steps,
Hath claw'd me in his clutch,
And hath shipped me into the land,
As if I had never been such.*⁶
[Throws up a scull.

HAM. That scull had a tongue in it, and could sing once: How the knave jowls it to the ground, as if it were Cain's jaw-bone, that did the first murder! This might be the pate of a politician, which this ass now o'er-reaches;⁷ one that would circumvent God, might it not?

title "A dyttie or sonet made by the lord Vaus, in the time of the noble queene Marye, representing the image of death."

The entire song is published by Dr. Percy, in the first volume of his *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*. STEEVENS.

⁶ *As if I had never been such.*] Thus, in the original:

"For age with stealing steps

"Hath claude me with his crowch;

"And lusty youthe away he leapes,

"As there had bene none such." STEEVENS.

⁷ ——— *which this ass now o'er-reaches;*] The folio reads—*o'er-offices*. STEEVENS.

In the quarto, [1604] for *over-offices* is *over-reaches*, which agrees better with the sentence: it is a strong exaggeration to remark, that an *ass* can *over-reach* him who would once have tried to *circumvent*—. I believe both these words were Shakspeare's. An author in revising his work, when his original ideas have faded from his mind, and new observations have produced new sentiments, easily introduces images which have been more newly impressed upon him, without observing their want of congruity to the general texture of his original design. JOHNSON.

HOR. It might, my lord.

HAM. Or of a courtier; which could say, *Good-morrow; sweet lord! How dost thou, good lord?* This might be my lord such-a-one, that prais'd my lord such-a-one's horse, when he meant to beg it;⁸ might it not?

HOR. Ay, my lord.

HAM. Why, e'en so: and now my lady Worm's;⁹ chapless, and knock'd about the mazzard with a sexton's spade: Here's fine revolution, an we had the trick to see't. Did these bones cost no more the breeding, but to play at loggats with them?¹⁰ mine ache to think on't.

⁸ *This might be my lord such-a-one, that prais'd my lord such-a-one's horse, when he meant to beg it;]* So, in *Timon of Athens*, Act I:

" — my lord, you gave

" Good words the other day of a bay courser

" I rode on; it is yours, because you lik'd it."

STEEVENS.

⁹ — *and now my lady Worm's;]* The scull that was *my lord Such-a-one's*, is now *my lady Worm's*. JOHNSON.

¹⁰ — *to play at loggats with them?]* This is a game played in several parts of England even at this time. A stake is fixed into the ground; those who play, throw *loggats* at it, and he that is nearest the stake, wins: I have seen it played in different counties at their sheep-sheering feasts, where the winner was entitled to a black fleece, which he afterwards presented to the farmer's maid to spin for the purpose of making a petticoat, and on condition that she knelt down on the fleece to be kissed by all the rusticks present.

So, Ben Jonson, *Tale of a Tub*, Act IV. sc. vi:

" Now are they tossing of his legs and arms,

" Like *loggats* at a pear-tree."

Again, in an old collection of Epigrams, Satires, &c.

" To play at *loggats*, nine holes, or ten pinnes."

Again, in Decker's *If this be not a good Play, the Devil is in it*, 1612:

" — two hundred crowns!

" I've lost as much at *loggats*."

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I. CLO. *A pick-axe, and a spade, a spade,* [Sings.
For—and a sbrouding sheet :
O, a pit of clay for to be made
*For such a guest is meet.*³

[Throws up a scull.

HAM. There's another: Why may not that be the scull of a lawyer? Where be his quiddits⁴ now, his quilllets,⁵ his cafes, his tenures, and his tricks?

It is one of the unlawful games enumerated in the statute of 33 of Henry VIII. STEEVENS.

³ *Loggeting in the fields* is mentioned for the first time among other "*new and crafty games and plays,*" in the statute of 33 Henry VIII. c. 9. Not being mentioned in former acts against unlawful games, it was probably not practised long before the statute of Henry the Eighth was made. MALONE.

A *loggat-ground*, like a skittle-ground, is strewed with ashes, but is more extensive. A bowl much larger than the jack of the game of bowls is thrown first. The pins, which I believe are called *loggats*, are much thinner, and lighter at one extremity than the other. The bowl being first thrown, the players take the pins up by the thinner and lighter end, and fling them towards the bowl, and in such a manner that the pins may once turn round in the air, and slide with the thinner extremity foremost towards the bowl. The pins are about one or two-and-twenty inches long. BLOUNT.

³ *For such a guest is meet.*] Thus in the original:

A pick-axe and a spade,
And eke a sbrouding sheet;
A house of clay for to be made,
For such a guest most meet. STEEVENS.

⁴ — *quiddits* &c.] i. e. subtilties. So, in *Soliman and Perseda*:
 "I am wife, but *quiddits* will not answer death."

STEEVENS.

Again, in Drayton's *Owle*, 4to, 1604:

"By some strange *quiddit*, or some wrested clause,
 "To find him guiltie of the breach of lawes."

MALONE.

⁵ — *his quilllets*,] So, in *Ram-Alley, or Merry-Tricks*, 1611:

"Nay, good Sir Throat, forbear your *quillits* now."

STEEVENS.

Quilllets are nice and frivolous distinctions. The word is rendered by Coles in his Latin Dictionary, 1679, *res frivola*. MALONE.

why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the sconce⁶ with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his action of battery? Humph! This fellow might be in's time a great buyer of land, with his statutes,⁷ his recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers,⁸ his recoveries: Is this the fine of his fines, and the recovery of his recoveries,⁹ to have his fine pate full of fine dirt? will his vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases, and double ones too, than the length and breadth of a pair of indentures? The very conveyances of his lands will hardly lie in this box; and must the inheritor himself have no more? ha?

HOR. Not a jot more, my lord.

⁶ ——— *the sconce* —] i. e. the head. So, in Lyly's *Mother Bombie*, 1594:

“ Laudo ingenium; I like thy *sconce*.”

Again, in *Ram-Alley, or Merry Tricks*, 1611:

“ ——— I say no more;

“ But 'tis within this *sconce* to go beyond them.”

STEEVENS.

See Vol. VII. p. 221, n. 3. MALONE.

⁷ ——— *his statutes*,] By a statute is here meant, not an act of parliament, but a species of security for money, affecting real property; whereby the lands of the debtor are conveyed to the creditor, till out of the rents and profits of them his debt may be satisfied. MALONE.

⁸ ——— *his double vouchers, &c.*] A recovery with *double voucher* is the one usually suffered, and is so denominated from *two persons* (the latter of whom is always the common cryer, or some such inferior person) being successively *vouched*, or called upon, to warrant the tenant's title. Both *fines* and *recoveries* are *fictions of law*, used to convert an estate tail into a fee simple. *Statutes* are (not acts of parliament, but) *statutes-merchant* and *statute*, particular modes of *recognizance* or acknowledgement for securing *debts*, which thereby become a charge upon the party's land. *Statutes* and *recognizances* are constantly mentioned together in the covenants of a purchase deed. RITSON.

⁹ *Is this the fine of his fines, and the recovery of his recoveries,*] Omitted in the quartos. STEEVENS.

PRINCE OF DENMARK. 307

HAM. Is not parchment made of sheep-skins?

HOR. Ay, my lord, and of calves-skins too.

HAM. They are sheep, and calves, which seek out assurance in that.¹ I will speak to this fellow:—
Whose grave's this, firrah?

I. CLO. Mine, fir.—

O, a pit of clay for to be made [Sings.
For such a guest is meet.

HAM. I think it be thine, indeed; for thou liest in't.

I. CLO. You lie out on't, fir, and therefore it is not yours: for my part, I do not lie in't, yet it is mine.

HAM. Thou dost lie in't, to be in't, and say it is thine: 'tis for the dead, not for the quick; therefore thou liest.

I. CLO. 'Tis a quick lie, fir; 'twill away again, from me to you.

HAM. What man dost thou dig it for?

I. CLO. For no man, fir.

HAM. What woman then?

I. CLO. For none neither.

HAM. Who is to be buried in't?

I. CLO. One, that was a woman, fir; but, rest her soul, she's dead.

HAM. How absolute the knave is! we must speak by the card,² or equivocation will undo us. By

¹ —assurance in that.] A quibble is intended. Deeds, which are usually written on parchment, are called the common assurances of the kingdom. MALONE.

² —by the card,] The card is the paper on which the dif-

the lord, Horatio, these three years I have taken note of it; the age is grown so picked,⁴ that the

ferent points of the compass were described. *To do any thing by the card, is, to do it with nice observation.* JOHNSON.

The *card* is a *sea-chart*, still so termed by mariners: and the word is afterwards used by Ofrick in the same sense. Hamlet's meaning will therefore be, we must speak *directly forward in a straight line*, plainly to the point. RITSON.

So, in *Macbeth*:

"And the very ports they blow, &c.

"In the shipman's *card*." STEEVENS.

—by the *card*,] i. e. we must speak with the same precision and accuracy as is observed in marking the true distances of coasts, the heights, courses, &c. in a *sea-chart*, which in our poet's time was called a *card*. So, in *The Commonwealth and Government of Venice*, 4to. 1599, p. 177: "Sebastian Munster in his *carde* of Venice—" Again, in Bacon's *Essays*, p. 326, edit. 1740: "Let him carry with him also some *card*, or book, describing the country where he travelleth." In 1589 was published in 4to. *A briefe Discourse of Mappes and Cardes, and of their Uses*.—The "*shipman's card*" in *Macbeth*, is the paper on which the different points of the compass are described. MALONE.

In every ancient *sea-chart* that I have seen, the compass, &c. was likewise introduced. STEEVENS.

⁴ —the age is grown so picked,] So *smart*, so *sharp*, says Sir T. Hanmer, very properly; but there was, I think, about that time, a *picked shoe*, that is, a *shoe with a long pointed toe*, in fashion, to which the allusion seems likewise to be made. *Every man now is smart; and every man now is a man of fashion.* JOHNSON.

This fashion of wearing shoes with long pointed toes was carried to such excess in England, that it was restrained at last by proclamation so long ago as the fifth year of Edward IV. when it was ordered, "that the beaks or pykes of shoes and boots should not pass two inches, upon pain of curfing by the clergy, and forfeiting twenty shillings, to be paid, one noble to the king, another to the cordwainers of London, and the third to the chamber of London;—and for other countries and towns the like order was taken.—Before this time, and since the year 1482, the pykes of shoes and boots were of such length, that they were fain to be tied up to the knee with chains of silver, and gilt, or at least filken laces." STEEVENS.

—the age is grown so picked,] i. e. so spruce, so quaint, so affected. See Vol. V. p. 302, n. 2; and Vol. VIII. p. 21, n. 9.

PRINCE OF DENMARK. 309

toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier, he galls his kibe.—How long hast thou been a grave-maker?

1. *CLO.* Of all the days i'the year, I came to't that day that our last king Hamlet overcame Fortinbras.

HAM. How long's that since?

1. *CLO.* Cannot you tell that? every fool can tell that: It was that very day that young Hamlet was born:⁵ he that is mad, and sent into England.

HAM. Ay, marry, why was he sent into England?

1. *CLO.* Why, because he was mad: he shall recover his wits there; or, if he do not, 'tis no great matter there.

HAM. Why?

1. *CLO.* 'Twill not be seen in him there; there the men are as mad as he.⁶

There is, I think, no allusion to *picked* or pointed shoes, as has been supposed. *Picked* was a common word of Shakspeare's age, in the sense above given, and is found in Minshew's Dictionary, 1617, with its original signification: "*Trim'd or dress'd sprucely.*" It is here used metaphorically. MALONE.

I should have concurred with Mr. Malone in giving a general sense to the epithet—*picked*, but for Hamlet's mention of the *toe* of the peasant, &c. STEEVENS.

⁵ —[*that young Hamlet was born:*] By this scene it appears that Hamlet was then thirty years old, and knew Yorick well, who had been dead twenty-two years. And yet in the beginning of the play he is spoken of as a *very young* man, one that designed to go back to school, i. e. to the university of Wittenberg. The poet in the fifth act had forgot what he wrote in the first.

BLACKSTONE.

⁶ 'Twill not be seen in him there; there the men are as mad as he.]

"Nimirum insanus paucis videatur; eo quod

"Maxima pars hominum morbo jactatur eodem."

Horace. Sat. L. II. iii. 120. STEEVENS.

HAM. How came he mad?

I. CLO. Very strangely, they say.

HAM. How strangely?

I. CLO. 'Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

HAM. Upon what ground?

I. CLO. Why, here in Denmark; I have been sexton here, man, and boy, thirty years.

HAM. How long will a man lie i'the earth ere he rot?

I. CLO. 'Faith, if he be not rotten before he die, (as we have many pocky corfes now-a-days,⁷ that will scarce hold the laying in,) he will last you some eight year, or nine year: a tanner will last you nine year.

HAM. Why he more than another?

I. CLO. Why, fir, his hide is so tann'd with his trade, that he will keep out water a great while; and your water is a fore decayer of your whorson dead body. Here's a scull now hath lain you i'the earth three-and-twenty years.

HAM. Whose was it?

I. CLO. A whorson mad fellow's it was; Whose do you think it was?

HAM. Nay, I know not.

I. CLO. A pestilence on him for a mad rogue! he pour'd a flaggon of Rhenish on my head once. This same scull, fir, was Yorick's scull,⁸ the king's jester.

HAM. This?

[*Takes the scull.*]

⁷ — *now a-days,*] Omitted in the quarto. MALONE.

⁸ — *Yorick's scull,*] Thus the folio.—The quarto reads—*Sir Yorick's scull.* MALONE.

1. *CLO.* E'en that.

HAM. Alas, poor Yorick!—I knew him, Horatio; a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy: he hath borne me on his back a thousand times; and now, how abhorr'd in my imagination it is! my gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips, that I have kiss'd I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now? your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now, to mock your own grinning?⁹ quite chap-fallen? Now get you to my lady's chamber,² and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favour³ she must come; make her laugh at that.—Pr'ythee, Horatio, tell me one thing.

HOR. What's that, my lord?

HAM. Dost thou think, Alexander look'd o' this fashion i'the earth?

HOR. E'en so.

HAM. And smelt so? pah!

[*Throws down the skull.*]

HOR. E'en so, my lord.

HAM. To what base uses we may return, Horatio! Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander, till he find it stopping a bung-hole?

⁹ ——— *your own grinning?*] Thus the quarto, 1604. The folio reads—*your own jeering*. In that copy, after this word, and *chap-fallen*, there is a note of interrogation, which all the editors have adopted. I doubt concerning its propriety. MALONE.

² ——— *my lady's chamber,*] Thus the folio. The quartos read—*my lady's table*, meaning, I suppose, her *dressing-table*.

STEEVENS.

³ ——— *to this favour*—] i. e. to this countenance or complexion. See Vol. V. p. 16, n. 5; and Vol. XII. p. 269, n. 5. MALONE.

HOR. 'Twere to consider too curiously, to consider so.

HAM. No, faith, not a jot; but to follow him thither with modesty enough, and likelihood to lead it: As thus; Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth to dust; the dust is earth; of earth we make loam: And why of that loam, whereto he was converted, might they not stop a beer-barrel?

Imperious Cæsar,⁴ dead, and turn'd to clay,
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away:
O, that that earth, which kept the world in awe,
Should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw!⁵
But soft! but soft! aside;—Here comes the king,

Enter Priests, &c. in procession; the corpse of OPHELIA, LAERTES and Mourners following it; King, Queen, their Trains, &c.

The queen, the courtiers: Who is this they follow?

⁴ Imperious Cæsar,] Thus the quarto, 1604. The editor of the folio substituted *imperial*, not knowing that *imperious* was used in the same sense. See Vol. XI. p. 391, n. 3; and Vol. XIII. p. 152, n. 2. There are other instances in the folio of a familiar term being substituted in the room of a more ancient word. See p. 314, n. 4. MALONE.

⁵ ——— *winter's flaw!*] Winter's *blast*. JOHNSON.

So, in *Marius and Sylla*, 1594:

“ ——— no doubt, this stormy *flaw*,

“ That Neptune sent to cast us on this shore.”

The quartos read—to expel the *water's* flaw. STEEVENS.

See Vol. X. p. 90, n. 9. A *flaw* meant a sudden gust of wind. So, in Florio's Italian Dictionary, 1598: “Gropo, a *flaw*, or berrie of wind.” See also Cotgrave's Dictionary, 1611: “*Lis de vent*, a gust or *flaw* of wind.” MALONE.

PRINCE OF DENMARK. 313

And with such maimed rites!⁶ This doth betoken,
The corse, they follow, did with desperate hand
Fordo its own life.⁷ 'Twas of some estate:⁸
Couch we a while, and mark.

[Retiring with HORATIO.]

LÆR. What ceremony else?

HAM. That is Laertes,
A very noble youth: Mark.

LÆR. What ceremony else?

I. PRIEST.⁹ Her obsequies have been as far en-
larg'd

As we have warranty:² Her death was doubtful;
And, but that great command o'erflows the order,
She should in ground unsanctify'd have lodg'd
Till the last trumpet; for charitable prayers,
Shards,³ flints, and pebbles, should be thrown on
her:

⁶ ——— *maimed rites!*] Imperfect obsequies. JOHNSON.

⁷ *Fordo its own life.*] To *fordo* is to undo, to destroy. So, in *Othello*:

“ ——— this is the night

“ That either makes me, or *fordo*es me quite.”

Again, in *Acolastus*, a comedy, 1529: “ ——— wolde to God it
might be lesful for me to *fordo* myself, or to make an ende of me!”

STEEVENS.

⁸ ——— *some estate:*] Some person of high rank. JOHNSON.

See Vol. XI. p. 300, n. 4. MALONE.

⁹ I. Priest.] This Priest in the old quarto is called *Doctqr.*

STEEVENS.

² *Her obsequies have been as far enlarg'd*

As we have warranty:] Is there any allusion here to the coroner's warrant, directed to the minister and church-wardens of a parish, and permitting the body of a person, who comes to an untimely end, to receive christian burial? WHALLEY.

³ *Shards,*] i. e. broken pots or tiles, called *pot-berds*, *tile-berds*. So, in *Job*, ii. 8: “ And he took him a *pot/berd*, (i. e. a piece of a broken pot,) to scrape himself withal.” RITSON.

Yet here she is allow'd her virgin crants,⁴
Her maiden strewments, and the bringing home
Of bell and burial.⁵

LÆR. Must there no more be done?

I. PRIEST. No more be done!
We should profane the service of the dead,
To sing a *requiem*,⁶ and such rest to her
As to peace-parted souls.

LÆR. Lay her i'the earth;—

⁴ — *allow'd her virgin crants,*] Evidently corrupted from *ebants*, which is the true word. A *specific* rather than a *generic* term being here required to answer to *maiden strewments*.

WARBURTON.

— *allow'd her virgin crants,*] Thus the quarto, 1604. For this unusual word the editor of the first folio substituted *rites*. By a more attentive examination and comparison of the quarto copies and the folio, Dr. Johnson, I have no doubt, would have been convinced that this and many other changes in the folio were not made by Shakspeare, as is suggested in the following note.

MALONE.

I have been informed by an anonymous correspondent, that *crants* is the German word for *garlands*, and I suppose it was retained by us from the Saxons. To carry *garlands* before the bier of a maiden, and to hang them over her grave, is still the practice in rural parishes.

Crants therefore was the original word, which the author, discovering it to be provincial, and perhaps not understood, changed to a term more intelligible, but less proper. *Maiden rites* give no certain or definite image. He might have put *maiden wreaths*, or *maiden garlands*, but he perhaps bestowed no thought upon it; and neither genius nor practice will always supply a hasty writer with the most proper diction. JOHNSON.

In Minshew's Dictionary, see *Beades*, where *roosen krants* means *sertum rosarium*; and such is the name of a character in this play.

TOLLET.

⁵ *Of bell and burial.*] *Burial*, here signifies interment in consecrated ground. WARBURTON.

⁶ *To sing a requiem,*] A *requiem*, is a mass performed in Popish churches for the rest of the soul of a person deceased. The folio reads—*sing sage requiem*. STEEVENS.

And from her fair and unpolluted flesh
May violets spring!—I tell thee, churlish priest,
A minist'ring angel shall my sister be,
When thou liest howling.

HAM. What, the fair Ophelia!

QUEEN. Sweets to the sweet: Farewell!

[Scattering flowers.

I hop'd, thou should'st have been my Hamlet's wife;
I thought, thy bride-bed to have deck'd, sweet
maid,

And not have strew'd thy grave.

LAER.

O, treble woe

Fall ten times treble on that curst head,
Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense
Depriv'd thee of!—Hold off the earth a while,
Till I have caught her once more in mine arms:

[Leaps into the grave.

Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead;
Till of this flat a mountain you have made,
To o'er-top old Pelion, or the skyish head
Of blue Olympus.

HAM. [Advancing.] What is he, whose grief
Bears such an emphasis? whose phrase of sorrow
Conjures the wand'ring stars, and makes them stand
Like wonder-wounded hearers? this is I,
Hamlet the Dane.

[Leaps into the grave.

LAER.

The devil take thy soul!

[Grappling with him.

HAM. Thou pray'st not well.
I pr'ythee, take thy fingers from my throat;
For, though I am not splenetic and rash,

¹ — from her fair and unpolluted flesh

May violets spring!] Thus, *Perfius*, Sat. I:

“ — e tumulo, fortunataque favilla,

“ Nascentur violæ!” STEEVENS.

Yet have I in me something dangerous,
Which let thy wisdom fear: Hold off thy hand.

KING. Pluck them afunder.

QUEEN. Hamlet, Hamlet!

ALL.⁸ Gentlemen,—

HOR. Good my lord, be quiet.

[*The Attendants part them, and they come out of the grave.*]

HAM. Why, I will fight with him upon this theme,
Until my eyelids will no longer wag.

QUEEN. O my son! what theme?

HAM. I lov'd Ophelia; forty thousand brothers
Could not, with all their quantity of love
Make up my sum.—What wilt thou do for her?

KING. O, he is mad, Laertes.

QUEEN. For love of God, forbear him.

HAM. 'Zounds, show me what thou'lt do:
Woul't weep? woul't fight? woul't fast? woul't
tear thyself?

Woul't drink up Efil? eat a crocodile?⁹

⁸ *All. &c.*] This is restored from the quartos. STEEVENS.

⁹ *Woul't drink up Efil? eat a crocodile?*] This word has through all the editions been distinguished by Italick characters, as if it were the proper name of some river; and so, I dare say, all the editors have from time to time understood it to be. But then this must be some river in Denmark; and there is none there so called; nor is there any near it in name, that I know of but *Yffel*, from which the province of Overysfel derives its title in the German Flanders. Besides, Hamlet is not proposing any impossibilities to Laertes, as the drinking up a river would be: but he rather seems to mean,—Wilt thou resolve to do things the most shocking and distasteful to human nature; and, behold, I am as resolute. I am persuaded the poet wrote:

Wilt drink up Eifel? eat a crocodile?

i. e. Wilt thou swallow down large draughts of vinegar? The

I'll do't.—Dost thou come here to whine?
To outface me with leaping in her grave?

proposition, indeed, is not very grand: but the doing it might be as distasteful and unfavoury as eating the flesh of a *crocodile*. And now there is neither an impossibility, nor an anticlimax: and the lowness of the idea is in some measure removed by the uncommon term. THEOBALD.

Sir T. Hanmer has,

Wilt drink up Nile? or eat a crocodile?

Hamlet certainly meant (for he says he will rant) to dare Laertes to attempt any thing, however difficult or unnatural; and might safely promise to follow the example his antagonist was to set, in draining the channel of a river, or trying his teeth on an animal whose scales are supposed to be impenetrable. Had Shakspeare meant to make Hamlet say—*Wilt thou drink vinegar?* he probably would not have used the term *drink up*; which means, *totally to exhaust*; neither is that challenge very magnificent, which only provokes an adversary to hazard a fit of the heart-burn or the colick.

The commentator's *Iffell* would serve Hamlet's turn or mine. This river is twice mentioned by Stowe, p. 735: "It standeth a good distance from the river *Iffell*, but hath a sconce on *Iffell* of incredible strength."

Again, by Drayton, in the 24th Song of his *Polyolbion*:

"The one o'er *Iffell's* banks the ancient Saxons taught;

"At *Over-Iffell* rests, the other did apply:—"

And in *King Richard II.* a thought, in part the same, occurs, Act II. sc. ii:

"——— the task he undertakes

"Is numb'ring sands, and *drinking oceans dry*."

But in an old Latin account of Denmark and the neighbouring provinces, I find the names of several rivers little differing from *Efil*, or *Eifill*, in spelling or pronunciation. Such are the *Essa*, the *Oefil*, and some others. The word, like many more, may indeed be irrecoverably corrupted; but, I must add, that few authors later than Chaucer or Skelton make use of *eyfel* for *vinegar*: nor has Shakspeare employed it in any other of his plays. The poet might have written the *Weifel*, a considerable river which falls into the Baltic ocean, and could not be unknown to any prince of Denmark. STEEVENS.

Woul't is a contraction of *wouldest*, [wouldest thou] and perhaps ought rather to be written *woul'st*. The quarto, 1604, has *efil*. In the folio the word is spelt *efile*. *Efil* or *eifel* is vinegar. The

Be buried quick with her, and so will I:
And, if thou prate of mountains, let them throw

word is used by Chaucer, and Skelton, and by Sir Thomas More, *Works*, p. 21, edit. 1557:

" — with fowre pocion
" If thou paine thy taft, remember therewithal
" How Chrifft for thee tafted *eifil* and gall."

The word is alfo found in Minshew's Dictionary, 1617, and in Coles' Latin Dictionary, 1679.

Our poet, as Dr. Farmer has obferved, has again employed the fame word in his 111th Sonnet:

" — like a willing patient I will drink
" Potions of *eyfell* 'gainft my ftrong infection;
" No *bitternefs* that I will bitter think,
" Nor double penance, to correct correction."

Mr. Steevens fupposes, that a river was meant, either the *Yffel*, or *Oefel*, or *Weifel*, a confiderable river which falls into the Baltick ocean. The words, *drink up*, he confiders as favourable to his notion. " Had Shakspeare, (he obferves,) meant to make Hamlet fay, *Wilt thou drink vinegar?* he probably would not have ufed the term *drink up*, which means, *totally to exhaust*. In *King Richard II.* Act II. fc. ii. (he adds) a thought in part the fame occurs:

" — the talk he undertakes,
" Is numb'ring fands, and *drinking oceans dry*."

But I muft remark, in that paffage evidently *impossibilities* are pointed out. Hamlet is only talking of difficult or painful exertions. Every man can weep, fight, faft, tear himfelf, drink a potion of vinegar, and eat a *piece* of a difsected crocodile, however difagreeable; for I have no doubt that the poet uſes the words *eat a crocodile*, for *eat of a crocodile*. We yet uſe the ſame phraſeology in familiar language.

On the phraſe *drink up* no ſtreſs can be laid, for our poet has employed the ſame expreſſion in his 114th Sonnet, without any idea of *entirely exhausting*, and merely as ſynonymous to *drink*:

" Or whether doth my mind, being crown'd with you,
" *Drink up* the monarch's plague, this flattery?"

Again, in the ſame Sonnet:

" — 'tis flattery in my ſeeing,
" And my great mind moſt kingly *drinks it up*."

Again, in *Timon of Athens*:

" And how his ſilence *drinks up* his applauſe."

In Shakspeare's time, as at preſent, to *drink up*, often meant no more than ſimply to drink. So, in Florio's Italian Dict. 1598:
" *Sorbire*, to ſip or *ſup up* any drink." In like manner we ſome-

PRINCE OF DENMARK. 319

llions of acres on us ; till our ground,
geing his pate against the burning zone,
ike Offa like a wart ! Nay, an thou'lt mouth,
rant as well as thou.

QUEEN. This is mere madness :
d thus awhile the fit will work on him ;
on, as patient as the female dove,
hen that her golden couplets are disclos'd,
s silence will sit drooping.

as say, " when you have *swallow'd down* this potion," though
mean no more than—" when you have swallow'd this potion."

MALONE.

Mr. Malone's strictures are undoubtedly acute, and though not,
y own opinion, decisive, may still be just. Yet as I cannot
ncile myself to the idea of a prince's challenging a nobleman
rink what Mrs. Quickly has called " a mefs of vinegar," I
neither changed our former text, nor withdrawn my original
arks on it, notwithstanding they are almost recapitulated in those
ny opponent.—On the score of such redundancy, however, I
need and solicit the indulgence of the reader. STEVENS.

This is mere madness :] This speech in the first folio is given
he king. MALONE.

When that her golden couplets are disclos'd,] To *disclose* was
ently used for to *hatch*. So, in *The Booke of Huntyng, Hawk-*
Fybyng, &c. bl. l. no date: " First they ben eges ; and after
ben *disclosed*, haukes ; and commonly goshaukes ben *disclosed*
me as the choughes." To *exclude* is the technical term at pre-
During three days after the pigeon has *batched* her *couplets*,
she lays no more than *two* eggs,) she never quits her nest, ex-
for a few moments in quest of a little food for herself ; as all
young require in that early state, is to be kept warm, an office
ch she never entrusts to the male. STEVENS.

The young nestlings of the pigeon, when first disclosed, are cal-
only covered with a yellow down : and for that reason stand
eed of being cherished by the warmth of the hen, to protect
n from the chillness of the ambient air, for a considerable time
r they are hatched. HEATH.

The word *disclose* has already occurred in a sense nearly allied to
b, in this play :

" And I do doubt, the hatch and the *disclose*

" Will be some danger." MALONE.

HAM. Hear you, sir;
 What is the reason that you use me thus?
 I lov'd you ever: But it is no matter;
 Let Hercules himself do what he may,
 The cat will mew, and dog will have his day. [Exit.]

KING. I pray thee, good Horatio, wait upon
 him.— [Exit HORATIO.]
 Strengthen your patience in our last night's speech;
[To LAERTES.]

We'll put the matter to the present push.—
 Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son.—
 This grave shall have a living monument:
 An hour of quiet shortly⁴ shall we see;
 Till then, in patience our proceeding be. [Exeunt.]

S C E N E II.

A Hall in the Castle.

Enter HAMLET and HORATIO.

HAM. So much for this, sir: now shall you see
 the other;—
 You do remember all the circumstance?

HOR. Remember it, my lord!

HAM. Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting,
 That would not let me sleep;⁵ methought, I lay

⁴ ———*shortly*——] The first quarto erroneously reads—*thirty*.
 The second and third—*thereby*. The folio—*shortly*. STEEVENS.

⁵ *Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting,*
That would not let me sleep; &c.] So, in *Troilus and Cressida*:
 “Within my soul there doth commence a fight,
 “Of this strange nature,” &c.

Worse than the mutines in the bilboes.⁶ Rashly,

The History of Hamlet, bl. let. furnished our author with the scheme of sending the Prince to England, and with most of the circumstances described in this scene:

[After the death of Polonius] "Fengon [the king in the present play] could not content himselfe, but still his mind gave him that the foole [Hamlet] would play him some trick of legerdemaine. And in that conceit, seeking to bee rid of him, determined to find the meanes to doe it by the aid of a stranger, making the king of England minister of his massacrour's resolution; to whom he purposed to send him, and by letters desire him to put him to death.

"Now to beare him company, were assigned two of Fengon's faithful ministers, bearing letters ingraven in wood, that contained Hamlet's death, in such sort as he had advertised the king of England. But the subtil Danish prince, (being at sea,) whilst his companions slept, having read the letters, and knowing his uncle's great treason, with the wicked and villainous mindes of the two courtiers that led him to the slaughter, rased out the letters that concerned his death, and instead thereof graved others, with commission to the king of England to hang his two companions; and not content to turn the death they had devised against him, upon their own neckes, wrote further, that king Fengon willed him to give his daughter to Hamlet in marriage." *Hyft. of Hamlet*, signat. G 2.

From this narrative it appears that the faithful ministers of Fengon were not unacquainted with the import of the letters they bore. Shakspeare, who has followed the story pretty closely, probably meant to describe their representatives, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, as equally guilty; as confederating with the king to deprive Hamlet of his life. So that his procuring their execution, though certainly not absolutely necessary to his own safety, does not appear to have been a wanton and unprovoked cruelty, as Mr. Steevens has supposed in his very ingenious observations on the general character and conduct of the prince throughout this piece.

In the conclusion of his drama the poet has entirely deviated from the fabulous history, which in other places he has frequently followed.

After Hamlet's arrival in England, (for no sea-fight is mentioned,) "the king, (says *The History of Hamlet*) admiring the young prince,—gave him his daughter in marriage, according to the counterfeit letters by him devised; and the next day caused the two servants of Fengon to be executed, to satisfy, as he thought, the king's desire." *Hyft. of Hamb.* Ibid.

And prais'd be rashness for it,—Let us know,

Hamlet, however, returned to Denmark, without marrying the king of England's daughter, who, it should seem, had only been *betrothed* to him. When he arrived in his native country, he made the courtiers drunk, and having burnt them to death, by setting fire to the banqueting-room wherein they sat, he went into Fongon's chamber, and killed him, "giving him (says the relater) such a violent blowe upon the chine of the neck, that he cut his head clean from the shoulders." *Ibid.* signat. F 3.

He is afterwards said to have been crowned king of Denmark.

MALONE.

I apprehend that a critick and a juryman are bound to form their opinions on what they see and hear in the cause before them, and not to be influenced by extraneous particulars unsupported by legal evidence in open court. I persist in observing that from Shakspeare's drama no proofs of the guilt of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern can be collected. They may be convicted by the black letter history; but if the tragedy forbears to criminate, it has no right to sentence them. This is sufficient for the commentator's purpose. It is not his office to interpret the plays of Shakspeare according to the novels on which they are founded, novels which the poet sometimes followed, but as often materially deserted. Perhaps he never confined himself strictly to the plan of any one of his originals. His negligence of poetick justice is notorious; nor can we expect that he who was content to sacrifice the pious Ophelia, should have been more scrupulous about the worthless lives of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Therefore, I still assert that, in the tragedy before us, their deaths appear both wanton and unprovoked; and the critick, like Bayes, must have recourse to somewhat *long before the beginning of this play*, to justify the conduct of its hero. STEVENS.

6 — mutines in the bilboes.] *Mutines*, the French word for seditious or disobedient fellows in the army or fleet. *Bilboes*, the ship's prison. JOHNSON.

To *mutine* was formerly used for to *mutiny*. See p. 229, B. 5. So *mutine*, for *mutiner*, or *mutineer*: "un homme *mutin*," Fr. a mutinous or seditious person. In *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, a tragedy, 1587, the adjective is used:

"Suppresseth *mutin* force, and practicke fraud."

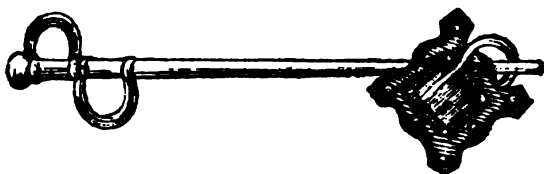
MALONE.

The *bilboes* is a bar of iron with fetters annexed to it, by which mutinous or disorderly sailors were anciently linked together. The

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Our indiscretion sometime serves us well,
When⁷ our deep plots do pall:⁸ and that should
teach us,

word is derived from *Bilboa*, a place in Spain where instruments of steel were fabricated in the utmost perfection. To understand Shakspeare's allusion completely, it should be known, that as these fetters connect the legs of the offenders very close together, their attempts to rest must be as fruitless as those of Hamlet, in whose mind *there was a kind of fighting that would not let him sleep*. Every motion of one must disturb his partner in confinement. The *bilboes* are still shown in the Tower of London, among the other spoils of the Spanish Armada. The following is the figure of them:



STEEVENS.

⁷ ———— *Rashly*,

And prais'd be rashness for it,—Let us know,

Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,

When &c.] Hamlet, delivering an account of his escape, begins with saying—That he *rashly*—and then is carried into a reflection upon the weakness of human wisdom. I *rashly*—praised be *rashness* for it—*Let us not think these events casual, but let us know*, that is, *take notice and remember*, that we sometimes succeed by *indiscretion*, when we fail by *deep plots*, and infer the perpetual superintendence and agency of the *Divinity*. The observation is just, and will be allowed by every human being who shall reflect on the course of his own life. JOHNSON.

This passage, I think, should be thus distributed:

————— *Rashly*

(And prais'd be rashness, for it lets us know,

Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,

When our deep plots do fail; and that should teach us,

There's a divinity that shapes our ends,

Rough-beau them how we will;—

Hor. *That is most certain.*)

Ham. *Up from my cabin, &c.*

So that *rashly* may be joined in construction with—in the dark grop'd I to find out them. TYRWHITT.

⁸ *When our deep plots do pall:]* Thus the first quarto, 1604.

There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will.⁹

HOR.

That is most certain.

HAM. Up from my cabin,
My sea-gown scarf'd about me, in the dark
Grop'd I to find out them: had my desire;
Finger'd their packet; and, in fine, withdrew
To mine own room again: making so bold,
My fears forgetting manners, to unseal
Their grand commission; where I found, Horatio,
A royal knavery; an exact command,—
Larded with many several sorts of reasons,²
Importing Denmark's health, and England's too,

The editor of the next quarto, for *pall*, substituted *fall*. The folio reads,—

When our dear plots do paule.

Mr. Pope and the subsequent editors read,—

When our deep plots do fail:—

but *pall* and *fail* are by no means likely to have been confounded. I have therefore adhered to the old copies. In *Antony and Cleopatra* our poet has used the participle:

“ I'll never follow thy *pall'd* fortunes more.” MALONE.

⁹ *There's a divinity that shapes our ends,*

Rough-hew them how we will.] Dr. Farmer informs me, that these words are merely technical. A wool-man, butcher, and dealer in *skewers*, lately observed to him that his nephew, (an idle lad) could only *assist* him in making them; “ ——— he could *rough-hew* them, but I was obliged to *shape* their ends.” Whoever recollects the profession of Shakspeare's father, will admit that his son might be no stranger to such a term. I have frequently seen packages of wool pinn'd up with *skewers*. STEEVENS.

² *Larded with many several sorts of reasons,*] I am afraid here is a very poor conceit, founded on an equivocal between *reasons* and *raisins*, which in Shakspeare's time were undoubtedly pronounced alike. *Sorts* of *raisins*, sugars, &c. is the common phraseology of shops.—We have the same quibble in another play. MALONE.

I suspect no quibble or conceit in these words of Hamlet. In one of Ophelia's songs a similar phrase has already occurred: “ *Larded* all with sweet flowers.” To *lard* any thing with *raisins*, however, was a practice unknown to ancient cookery. STEEVENS.

With, ho! such bugs and goblins in my life,³—
That, on the supervise, no leifure bated,⁴
No, not to stay the grinding of the axe,
My head should be struck off.

HOR. Is't possible?

HAM. Here's the commission; read it at more
leifure.

But wilt thou hear now how I did proceed?

HOR. Ay, 'beseech you.

HAM. Being thus benetted round with villanies,
Or I could make⁵ a prologue to my brains,
They had begun the play;⁶—I sat me down;

³ *With, ho! such bugs and goblins in my life,*] *With such causes of terror, rising from my character and designs.* JOHNSON.

A *bug* was no less a terrifick being than a goblin. So, in Spenser's *Faery Queen*, Book II. c. iii:

"As ghastly *bug* their haire an end does reare."

We call it at present a *bugbear*. STEEVENS.

See Vol. X. p. 376, n. 7. MALONE.

⁴ — *no leifure bated,*] *Bated*, for *allowed*. To *abate*, signifies to *deduct*; this deduction, when applied to the person in whose favour it is made, is called an *allowance*. Hence he takes the liberty of using *bated* for *allowed*. WARBURTON.

No leifure bated—means, without any *abatement* or intermission of time. MALONE.

⁵ *Or I could make—*] Or in old English signified *before*. See Vol. VIII. p. 142, n. 3. MALONE.

⁶ *Being thus benetted round with villanies,*

Or I could make a prologue to my brains,

They had begun the play;] Hamlet is telling how luckily every thing fell out; he groped out their commission in the dark without waking them; he found himself doomed to immediate destruction. Something was to be done for his preservation. An expedient occurred, not produced by the comparison of one method with another, or by a regular deduction of consequences, but before he could make a prologue to his brains, they had begun the play. Before he could summon his faculties, and propose to himself what should be done, a complete scheme of action presented itself to him. His mind operated before he had excited it. This appears to me to be the meaning. JOHNSON.

Devis'd a new commission; wrote it fair:
 I once did hold it, as our statists do,⁵
 A baseness to write fair,⁶ and labour'd much
 How to forget that learning; but, sir, now
 It did me yeoman's service:⁷ Wilt thou know
 The effect of what I wrote?

HOR.

Ay, good my lord.

HAM. An earnest conjuration from the king,—
 As England was his faithful tributary;
 As love between them like the palm might flourish;⁸
 As peace should still her wheaten garland wear,
 And stand a comma 'tween their amities;⁹

⁵ — as our statists do,] A *statist* is a *statesman*. So, in Shirley's *Humorous Courtier*, 1640:

“ — that he is wise, a *statist*.”

Again, in Ben Jonson's *Magnetick Lady*:

“ Will screw you out a secret from a *statist*.” STEEVENS.

Most of the great men of Shakspeare's times, whose autographs have been preserved, wrote very bad hands; their secretaries very neat ones. BLACKSTONE.

⁶ I once did hold it, as our statists do,

A baseness to write fair,] “ I have in my time, (says Montaigne,) seen some, who by writing did earnestly get both their titles and living, to disavow their apprenticeship, marre their pen, and affect the ignorance of *so vulgar a qualitie*.” Florio's translation, 1603, p. 125. RITSON.

⁷ — yeoman's service:] The meaning, I believe, is, *This yeomanly qualification was a most useful servant, or yeoman, to me; i. e. did me eminent service.* The ancient yeomen were famous for their military valour. “ These were the good archers in times past, (says Sir Thomas Smith,) and the stable troop of footmen that affraide all France.” STEEVENS.

⁸ — like the palm might flourish;] This comparison is scriptural. “ The righteous shall flourish like a palm-tree.” *Psalms*, xcii. 11. STEEVENS.

⁹ As peace should still her wheaten garland wear,

And stand a comma 'tween their amities;] The expression of our author is, like many of his phrases, sufficiently constrained and affected, but it is not incapable of explanation. The *comma* is the

And many such like as's of great charge,²—
That, on the view and knowing of these contents,
Without debatement further, more, or less,
He should the bearers put to sudden death,
Not thriving-time allow'd.³

note of *connection* and continuity of sentences; the *period* is the note of *abruption* and disjunction. Shakspeare had it perhaps in his mind to write,—That unless England complied with the mandate, *war should put a period to their amity*; he altered his mode of diction, and thought that, in an opposite sense, he might put, that *peace should stand a comma between their amities*. This is not an easy stile; but is it not the stile of Shakspeare? JOHNSON.

² —as's of great charge,] *Affes* heavily loaded. A quibble is intended between *as* the conditional particle, and *afs* the beast of burthen. That *charg'd* anciently signified *loaded*, may be proved from the following passage in *The Widow's Tears*, by Chapman, 1612 :

“ Thou must be the *afs* charg'd with crowns to make way.”
JOHNSON.

Shakspeare has so many quibbles of his own to answer for, that there are those who think it hard he should be charged with others which perhaps he never thought of. STEEVENS.

Though the first and obvious meaning of these words certainly is, “ many similar adjurations, or monitory injunctions, of great weight and importance,” yet Dr. Johnson's notion of a quibble being also in the poet's thoughts, is supported by two other passages of Shakspeare, in which *affes* are introduced as usually employed in the carriage of gold, a *charge* of no small weight :

“ He shall but bear them, as the *afs* bears gold,
“ To groan and sweat under the business.”

Julius Cæsar.

Again, in *Measure for Measure* :

“ —like an *afs*, whose back with *ingots* bows,
“ Thou bear'st thy heavy riches but a journey,
“ And death unloads thee.”

In further support of his observation, it should be remembered, that the letter *s* in the particle *as* in the midland counties usually pronounced hard, as in the pronoun *us*. Dr. Johnson himself always pronounced the particle *as* hard, and so I have no doubt did Shakspeare. It is so pronounced in Warwickshire at this day. The first folio accordingly has—*affis*. MALONE.

³ Not thriving-time allow'd.] i. e. without time for confession of

HOR. How was this seal'd?

HAM. Why, even in that was heaven ordinant;
I had my father's signet in my purse,
Which was the model of that Danish seal:³
Folded the writ up in form of the other;
Subscrib'd it; gave't the impression; plac'd it safely,
The changeling never known:⁴ Now, the next day
Was our sea-fight; and what to this was sequent
Thou know'st already.

HOR. So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to't.

HAM. Why, man,⁵ they did make love to this
employment;

They are not near my conscience; their defeat
Does by their own insinuation grow:⁶
'Tis dangerous, when the baser nature comes
Between the pafs and fell incensed points
Of mighty opposites.

HOR. Why, what a king is this!

HAM. Does it not, think thee,⁷ stand me now
upon?

He that hath kill'd my king, and whor'd my mother;
Popp'd in between the election and my hopes;

their sins: another proof of Hamlet's christian-like disposition.
See Vol. XIV. p. 508, n. 5. STEEVENS.

³ — *the model of that Danish seal:*] The *model* is in old
language the *copy*. The signet was formed in imitation of the
Danish seal. See Vol. VIII. p. 279, n. 5. MALONE.

⁴ *The changeling never known:*] A *changeling* is a *child* which
the fairies are supposed to leave in the room of that which they
steal. JOHNSON.

⁵ *Why, man, &c.*] This line is omitted in the quartos.

⁶ — *by their own insinuation—*] *Insinuation*, for corruptly
obtruding themselves into his service. WARBURTON.

By their having insinuated or thrust themselves into the employ-
ment. MALONE.

⁷ — *think thee,*] i. e. bethink thee. MALONE.

Thrown out his angle⁸ for my proper life,
And with such cozenage; is't not perfect conscience,
To quit him⁹ with this arm? and is't not to be
damn'd,

To let this canker of our nature come
In further evil?

HOR. It must be shortly known to him from
England,
What is the issue of the business there.

HAM. It will be short: the interim is mine;
And a man's life's no more than to say, one.
But I am very sorry, good Horatio,
That to Laertes I forgot myself;
For by the image of my cause, I see
The portraiture of his: I'll count his favours:²
But, sure, the bravery of his grief did put me
Into a towering passion.

HOR. Peace; who comes here?

⁸ *Thrown out his angle*—] An *angle* in Shakspeare's time signified a fishing-rod. So, in Lyly's *Sapho and Phao*, 1591:

"*Phao*. But he may blefs fishing, that caught such a one in the sea.
¹⁰ *Venus*. It was not with an *angle*, my boy, but with a net."

MALONE.

⁹ *To quit him*—] To requite him; to pay him his due. JOHNSON.

This passage, as well as the three following speeches, is not in the quartos. STEEVENS.

² — *I'll count his favours*:] Thus the folio. Mr. Rowe first made the alteration, which is perhaps unnecessary. *I'll count his favours* may mean,—*I will make account of them, i. e. reckon upon them, value them.* STEEVENS.

What favours has Hamlet received from Laertes, that he was to make account of?—I have no doubt but we should read,

— *I'll court his favour.* M. MASON.

Mr. Rowe for *count* very plausibly reads *court*. MALONE.

Hamlet may refer to former civilities of Laertes, and weigh them against his late intemperance of behaviour; or may *count* on such kindness as he expected to receive in consequence of a meditated reconciliation. STEEVENS.

Enter OSRICK.

OSR. Your lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.

HAM. I humbly thank you, sir.—Dost know this water-fly?³

HOR. No, my good lord.

HAM. Thy state is the more gracious; for 'tis a vice to know him: He hath much land, and fertile: let a beast be lord of beasts, and his crib shall stand at the king's mess: 'Tis a chough;⁴ but, as I say, spacious in the possession of dirt.

OSR. Sweet lord, if your lordship were at leisure, I should impart a thing to you from his majesty.

HAM. I will receive it, sir, with all diligence of spirit: Your bonnet to his right use; 'tis for the head.

OSR. I thank your lordship, 'tis very hot.

HAM. No, believe me, 'tis very cold; the wind is northerly.

OSR. It is indifferent cold, my lord, indeed.

³ — *Dost know this water-fly?*] A *water-fly* skips up and down upon the surface of the water, without any apparent purpose or reason, and is thence the proper emblem of a busy trifler.

JOHNSON.

Water-fly is in *Troilus and Cressida* used as a term of reproach, for contemptible from smallness of size. "How (says Therfites) the poor world is pestered with such *water-flies*; *diminutives of nature*." *Water-flies* are gnats. This insect in Chaucer denotes a thing of no value. *Canterbury Tales*, v. 17203, Mr. Tyrwhitt's edition:

"Not worth to thee as in comparison

"*The mountance [value] of a gnat.*" HOLT WHITE.

⁴ — *'Tis a chough;*] A kind of jackdaw. JOHNSON.

See Vol. VIII. p. 430, n. 7. STEEVENS.

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HAM. But yet, methinks, it is very fultry and hot;⁵ or my complexion⁶—

OSR. Exceedingly, my lord; it is very fultry,⁷—as 'twere,—I cannot tell how.—My lord, his majesty bade me signify to you, that he has laid a great wager on your head: Sir, this is the matter,—

HAM. I beseech you, remember⁸—

[HAMLET moves him to put on his hat.

OSR. Nay, good my lord; for my ease, in good faith.⁹ Sir,² here is newly come to court, Laertes:

⁵ But yet, methinks, it is very fultry &c.] Hamlet is here playing over the same farce with Ofrick, which he had formerly done with Polonius. STEEVENS.

⁶ —or my complexion—] The folios read—for my complexion. STEEVENS.

⁷ Exceedingly, my lord; it is very fultry,]

“ —igniculum brumæ si tempore poscas,

“ Accipit endromidem; si dixeris æstuo, sudat.” JUV.

MALONE.

⁸ I beseech you, remember—] “Remember not your courtesy,” I believe, Hamlet would have said, if he had not been interrupted. “Remember thy courtesy,” he could not possibly have said, and therefore this abrupt sentence may serve to confirm an emendation which I proposed in *Love's Labour's Lost*, Vol. V. p. 308, n. 6, where Armado says,—“I do beseech thee, remember thy courtesy;—I beseech thee, apparel thy head.” I have no doubt that Shakespeare there wrote, “—remember not thy courtesy,”—and that the negative was omitted by the negligence of the compositor.

MALONE.

⁹ Nay, good my lord; for my ease, in good faith.] This seems to have been the affected phrase of the time. Thus, in Marston's *Malcontent*, 1604: “I beseech you, fir, be covered.—No, in good faith for my ease.” And in other places. FARMER.

It appears to have been the common language of ceremony in our author's time. “Why do you stand bareheaded? (says one of the speakers in Florio's *SECOND FRUTES*, 1591) you do yourself wrong. Pardon me, good fir (replies his friend;) I do it for my ease.”

Again, in *A New Way to pay old Debts*, by Massinger, 1633:

“ ——— Is't for your ease

“ You keep your hat off?” MALONE.

believe me, an absolute gentleman, full of most excellent differences,³ of very soft society, and great shewing: Indeed, to speak feelingly⁴ of him, he is the card or calendar of gentry,⁵ for you shall find in him the continent of what part a gentleman would see.⁶

HAM. Sir, his definement suffers no perdition in you;⁷—though, I know, to divide him inventorially, would dizzy the arithmetick of memory; and yet but raw neither,⁸ in respect of his quick fail. But,

² *Sir, &c.*] The folio omits this and the following fourteen speeches; and in their place substitutes only, “Sir, you are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is at his weapon.”

³ — *full of most excellent differences,*] Full of *distinguishing* excellencies. JOHNSON. STEEVERNS.

⁴ — *speak feelingly* —] The first quarto reads, — *sellingly*. So, in another of our author’s plays:

“To things of sale a *feller’s* praise belongs.” STEEVERNS.

⁵ — *the card or calendar of gentry,*] The general preceptor of elegance; the *card* by which a gentleman is to direct his course; the *calendar* by which he is to choose his time, that what he does may be both excellent and seasonable. JOHNSON.

⁶ — *for you shall find in him the continent of what part a gentleman would see.*] You shall find him containing and comprising every quality which a gentleman would desire to contemplate for imitation. I know not but it should be read, *You shall find him the continent.*

JOHNSON.

⁷ *Sir, his definement &c.*] This is designed as a specimen, and ridicule of the court-jargon amongst the *precieux* of that time. The sense in English is, “Sir, he suffers nothing in your account of him, though to enumerate his good qualities particularly would be endless; yet when we had done our best, it would still come short of him. However, in strictness of truth, he is a great genius, and of a character so rarely to be met with, that to find any thing like him we must look into his mirror, and his imitators will appear no more than his shadows.”

WARBURTON.

⁸ — *and yet but raw neither,*] We should read—*slow*.

WARBURTON.

I believe *raw* to be the right word; it is a word of great latitude; *raw* signifies *unripe, immature*, thence *unformed, imperfect, unskilful*.

in the verity of extolment, I take him to be a soul of great article;⁹ and his infusion of such dearth^a and rareness, as, to make true diction of him, his semblable is his mirror; and, who else would trace him, his umbrage, nothing more.

OSR. Your lordship speaks most infallibly of him.

HAM. The concernancy, sir? why do we wrap the gentleman in our more rawer breath?

OSR. Sir?

HOR. Is't not possible to understand in another tongue? You will do't, sir, really.³

The best account of him would be *imperfect*, in respect of his quick fail. The phrase *quick fail* was, I suppose, a proverbial term for *activity of mind*. JOHNSON.

⁹ — *a soul of great article*;] This is obscure. I once thought it might have been, *a soul of great altitude*; but, I suppose, *a soul of great article*, means *a soul of large comprehension*, of many contents; the particulars of an inventory are called *articles*.

JOHNSON.

^a — *of such dearth* —] *Dearth* is *dearths*, value, price. And his internal qualities of such value and rarity. JOHNSON.

³ *Is't not possible to understand in another tongue? You will do't, sir, really.*] Of this interrogatory remark the sense is very obscure. The question may mean, *Might not all this be understood in plainer language*. But then, *you will do it, sir, really*, seems to have no use, for who could doubt but plain language would be intelligible? I would therefore read, *Is't possible not to be understood in a mother tongue? You will do it, sir, really.* JOHNSON.

Suppose we were to point the passage thus: "Is't not possible to understand? In another tongue you will do it, sir, really."

The speech seems to be addressed to *Osrick*, who is puzzled by Hamlet's imitation of his own affected language. STEEVENS.

Theobald has silently substituted *rarely* for *really*. I think Horatio's speech is addressed to Hamlet. *Another tongue* does not mean as I conceive, *plainer language*, (as Dr. Johnson supposed,) but "language so fantastical and affected as to have the appearance of a *foreign tongue*:" and in the following words Horatio, I think,

HAM. What imports the nomination of this gentleman?

OSR. Of Laertes?

HOR. His purse is empty already; all his golden words are spent.

HAM. Of him, fir.

OSR. I know, you are not ignorant—

HAM. I would, you did, fir; yet, in faith, if you did, it would not much approve me; ⁴—Well, fir.

OSR. You are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is—

HAM. I dare not confess that, lest I should compare with him in excellence; ⁵ but, to know a man well, were to know himself.

OSR. I mean, fir, for his weapon; but in the imputation laid on him by them, in his meed ⁶ he's unfellow'd.

HAM. What's his weapon?

OSR. Rapier and dagger.

means to praise Hamlet for imitating this kind of babble so happily. I suspect, however, that the poet wrote—*Is't possible not to understand in a mother tongue?*

Since this note was written, I have found the very same error in Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, 4to. 1605, B. II. p. 60: “—the art of grammar, whereof the use in *another* tongue is small, in a *foreine* tongue more.” The author in his table of Errata says, it should have been printed—in *mother* tongue. MALONE.

⁴ — *if you did, it would not much approve me;*] If you knew I was not ignorant, your esteem would not much advance my reputation. To *approve*, is to *recommend to approbation*. JOHNSON.

⁵ *I dare not confess that, lest I should compare with him &c.*] I dare not pretend to know him, lest I should pretend to an equality: no man can completely know another, but by knowing himself, which is the utmost extent of human wisdom. JOHNSON.

⁶ — *in his meed*—] In his excellence. JOHNSON.

See Vol. X. p. 366, n. 2. MALONE.

PRINCE OF DENMARK. 335

HAM. That's two of his weapons: but, well.

OSR. The king, sir, hath wager'd with him six Barbary horses: against the which he has impawn'd,¹ as I take it, six French rapiers and poniards, with their assigns, as girdle, hangers,² and so:³ Three of

¹ — *impawn'd*,] Thus the quarto, 1604. The folio reads — *impon'd*. *Pignare* in Italian signifies both to *pawn*, and to lay a wager. MALONE.

Perhaps it should be, *depon'd*. So, *Hudibras*:

“ I would upon this cause *depone*,

“ As much as any I have known.”

But perhaps *imponed* is pledged, *impawned*, so spelt to ridicule the affectation of uttering English words with French pronunciation.

JOHNSON.

To *impose* is certainly right, and means to put down, to stake, from the verb *impono*. RITSON.

² — *bangers*,] Under this term were comprehended four graduated straps, &c. that hung down in a belt on each side of its receptacle for the sword. I write this, with a most gorgeous belt, at least as ancient as the time of James I. before me. It is of crimson velvet embroidered with gold, and had belonged to the Somerset family.

In Massinger's *Fatal Dowry*, Liladam, (who when arrested as a gentleman, avows himself to have been a tailor,) says

“ — This rich sword

“ Grew suddenly out of a tailor's bodkin;

“ These *bangers* from my vails and fees in hell:” &c.

i. e. the tailor's *bell*; the place into which shreds and remnants are thrown.

Again, in *The Birth of Merlin*, 1662:

“ He has a fair sword, but his *bangers* are fallen.”

Again, in *Rhodan and Iris*, 1631:

“ ——— a rapier

“ Hatch'd with gold, with hilt and *bangers* of the new fashion.” STEEVENS.

The word *bangers* has been misunderstood. That part of the girdle or belt by which the sword was suspended, was in our poet's time called *the bangers*. See Minshew's Dictionary, 1617: “ The *bangers* of a sword. G. Pendants d'espée, L. Subcingulum,” &c. So, in an Inventory found among the papers of Hamlet Clarke, an attorney of a court of record in London in the year 1611, and printed in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, Vol. LVIII. p. 111:

the carriages, in faith, are very dear to fancy, very responsive to the hilts, most delicate carriages, and of very liberal conceit.

HAM. What call you the carriages?

HOR. I knew, you must be edified by the margent,² ere you had done.

OSR. The carriages, fir, are the hangers.

HAM. The phrase would be more german³ to the matter, if we could carry a cannon by our sides; I would, it might be hangers till then. But, on: Six Barbary horses against six French swords, their assigns, and three liberal-conceited carriages; that's the French bet against the Danish: Why is this impawn'd, as you call it?

OSR. The king, fir, hath lay'd,⁴ that in a dozen

"*Item, One payre of girdle and bangers, of silver purle, and cullored filke.*

"*Item, One payre of girdler and bangers upon white fattene.*"

The bangers ran in an oblique direction from the middle of the forepart of the girdle across the left thigh, and were attached to the girdle behind. MALONE.

² — you must be edified by the margent,] Dr. Warburton very properly observes, that in the old books the gloss or comment was usually printed on the margin of the leaf. So, in Decker's *Honest Whore*, Part II. 1630:

" ————— I read

" Strange comments in those margins of your looks."

Again, in *The Contention betwixte Churchyard and Camell*, &c. 1560:

" A solempne processe at a bluffshe

" He quoted here and there,

" With matter in the margent set" &c.

This speech is omitted in the folio. STEEVENS.

³ — more german —] More *a-kin*. JOHNSON.

So, in *The Winter's Tale*: " Those that are german to him, though removed fifty times, shall come under the hangman."

STEEVENS.

⁴ The king, fir, hath lay'd,] This wager I do not understand.

passes between yourself and him, he shall not exceed you three hits; he hath laid, on twelve for nine; and it would come to immediate trial, if your lordship would vouchsafe the answer.

HAM. How, if I answer, no?

OSR. I mean, my lord, the opposition of your person in trial.

HAM. Sir, I will walk here in the hall: If it please his majesty, it is the breathing time of day with me: let the foils be brought, the gentleman willing, and the king hold his purpose, I will win for him, if I can; if not, I will gain nothing but my shame, and the odd hits.

OSR. Shall I deliver you so?

HAM. To this effect, sir; after what flourish your nature will.

OSR. I commend my duty to your lordship.

[*Exit.*]

HAM. Yours, yours.—He does well, to commend it himself; there are no tongues else for's turn.

In a dozen passes one must exceed the other more or less than three hits. Nor can I comprehend, how, in a dozen, there can be twelve to nine. The passage is of no importance; it is sufficient that there was a wager. The quarto has the passage as it stands. The folio,—He hath one twelve for mine. JOHNSON.

As three or four complete pages would scarcely hold the remarks already printed, together with those which have lately been communicated to me in MSS. on this very unimportant passage, I shall avoid both partiality and tediousness, by the omission of them all.—I therefore leave the conditions of this wager to be adjusted by the members of Brookes's, or the Jockey-Club at Newmarket, who on such subjects may prove the most enlightened commentators, and most successfully bestir themselves in the cold unpoetick dabble of calculation. STEEVENS.

HOR. This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head.⁵

HAM. He did comply with his dug, before he suck'd it.⁶ Thus has he (and many more of the

⁵ *This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head.*] I see no particular propriety in the image of the lapwing. Ofrick did not run till he had done his business. We may read,—*This lapwing ran away*—That is, *this fellow was full of unimportant bustle from his birth.* JOHNSON.

The same image occurs in Ben Jonson's *Staple of News*:

" ——— and coachmen
" To mount their boxes reverently, and drive
" Like lapwings with a shell upon their heads,
" Thorough the streets."

And I have since met with it in several other plays. The meaning, I believe, is—This is a *forward* fellow. So, in *The White Devil*, or *Vittoria Corombona*, 1612:

" ——— Forward lapwing,
" He flies with the shell on's head."

Again, in Greene's *Never too late*, 1616: "Are you no sooner hatched, with the *lapwing*, but you will run away with the *shell on your head*?"

Again, in *Revenge for Honour*, by Chapman:

" Boldness enforces youth to hard achievements
" Before their time; makes them run forth like *lapwings*
" From their warm nest, part of the *shell yet sticking*
" Unto their downy heads." STEEVENS.

I believe, Hamlet means to say that Ofrick is, bustling and impetuous, and yet "but *raw* in respect of his quick fail." So, in *The Character of an Oxford Incendiary*, 1643: "This *lapwing* incendiary ran away *half-hatch'd* from Oxford, to raise a combustion in Scotland."

In Meres's *Wit's Treasury*, 1598, we have the same image expressed exactly in our poet's words: "As the *lapwing runneth away with the shell on her head*, as soon as she is hatched," &c.

MALONE.

⁶ *He did comply with his dug, &c.*] Thus the folio. The quarto, 1604, reads—*A* [i. e. *he*] did, sir, with his dug, &c. For *comply* Dr. Warburton and the subsequent editors; read—*compliment*. The verb *to compliment* was not used, as I think, in the time of Shakspeare. MALONE.

I doubt whether any alteration be necessary. Shakspeare seems to have used *comply* in the sense in which we use the verb *compliment*.

same breed,⁷ that, I know, the drossy age dotes on,) only got the tune of the time, and outward habit of encounter;⁸ a kind of yesty collection, which carries them through and through the most fond and winnow'd opinions;⁹ and do but blow them to their trial, the bubbles are out.²

See before, Act II. sc. ii: "—let me *comply* with you in this garb." TYRWHITT.

⁷ —and many *more of the same breed*,] The first folio has—*and mine more of the same beavy*. The second folio—*and nine more &c.* Perhaps the last is the true reading. STEEVENS.

There may be a propriety in *bevy*, as he has just called him a *lapwing*. TOLLET.

"Many more of the same breed," is the reading of the quarto, 1604. MALONE.

⁸ —outward *habit of encounter*;] Thus the folio. The quartos read—*out of an habit of encounter*. STEEVENS.

Outward habit of encounter, is exterior politeness of address; in allusion to Osrick's last speech. HENLEY.

We should, I think, read—*an outward habit, &c.* MALONE.

⁹ —a kind of yesty collection, which carries them through and through the most fond and winnowed opinions;] This passage in the quarto stands thus:—"They have got out of the habit of encounter, a kind of misty collection, which carries them through and through the most profane and trennowned opinions." If this printer preserved any traces of the original, our author wrote, "the most *fane* and *renowned* opinions," which is better than *fann'd* and *winnow'd*.

The meaning is, "these men have got the cant of the day, a superficial readiness of slight and cursory conversation, a kind of frothy collection of fashionable prattle, which yet carries them through the most select and approving judgements. This airy facility of talk sometimes imposes upon wise men."

Who has not seen this observation verified? JOHNSON.

The quarto, 1604, reads, "—dotes on; *only* got the tune of the time, and out of *an habit*," &c. and—not *misty*, but *kisty*; the folio rightly, *yeasty*: the same quarto has not *trennowned*, but *trennowed* (a corruption of *winnowed*;) for which (according to the usual process,) the next quarto gave *trennowned*. *Fond* and *winnowed* is the reading of the folio. MALONE.

Fond is evidently opposed to *winnowed*. *Fond*, in the language

Enter a Lord.

LORD. My lord,¹ his majesty commended him to you by young Osrick, who brings back to him, that you attend him in the hall: He sends to know, if your pleasure hold to play with Laertes, or that you will take longer time.

HAM. I am constant to my purposes, they follow

of Shakspeare's age, signified *foolish*. So, in *The Merchant of Venice*:

"Thou naughty jailer, why art thou so *found*," &c.

Winnowed is *sifted*, *examined*. The sense is then, that their conversation was yet successful enough to make them passable not only with the weak, but with those of sounder judgement. The same opposition in terms is visible in the reading which the quartos offer. *Profane* or *vulgar* is opposed to *trenowned*, or *thrice renowned*.

STEEVENS.

Fann'd and *winnow'd* seems right to me. Both words *winnowed*, *fan'd** and *dreft*, occur together in Markham's *English Husbandman*, p. 117. So do *fan'd* and *winnow'd*, *fann'd* and *winnowed* in his *Husbandry*, p. 18, 76, and 77. So, Shakspeare mentions together the *fan* and *wind* in *Troilus and Cressida*, Act V. sc. iii.

TOLLET.

On considering this passage, it always appeared to me that we ought to read, "the most *found* and winnowed opinions:" and I have been confirmed in that conjecture by a passage I lately met with in *Horwel's Letters*, where speaking of a man merely contemplative, he says, "Besides he may want judgement in the choice of his authors, and knows not how to turn his hand either in weighing or *winnowing* the *foundest* opinions." Book III. Letter viii.

M. MASON.

² — *do but blow them &c.*] These men of show, without solidity, are like bubbles raised from soap and water, which dance, and glitter, and please the eye, but if you extend them, by blowing hard, separate into a mist; so if you oblige these specious talkers to extend their compass of conversation, they at once discover the tenuity of their intellects. JOHNSON.

³ *My lord*, &c.] All that passes between *Hamlet* and this *Lord* is omitted in the folio. STEEVENS.

* So written without the apostrophe, and easily might in MS. be mistaken for *find*.

PRINCE OF DENMARK. '341

the king's pleasure: if his fitness speaks, mine is ready; now, or whensoever, provided I be so able as now.

LORD. The king, and queen, and all are coming down.

HAM. In happy time.

LORD. The queen desires you, to use some gentle entertainment ⁴ to Laertes, before you fall to play.

HAM. She well instructs me. [Exit Lord.

HOR. You will lose this wager, my lord.

HAM. I do not think so; since he went into France, I have been in continual practice; I shall win at the odds.⁵ But thou would'st not think, how ill all's here about my heart: but it is no matter.

HOR. Nay, good my lord,—

HAM. It is but foolery; but it is such a kind of gain-giving,⁶ as would, perhaps, trouble a woman.

HOR. If your mind dislike any thing, obey it:⁷

⁴ —gentle entertainment—] Mild and temperate conversation. JOHNSON.

I shall win at the odds.] I shall succeed with the advantage I am allowed. MALONE.

—a kind of gain-giving,] Gain-giving is the same as mis-g. STEEVENS.

If your mind dislike any thing, obey it:] With these presages of evils arising in the mind, the poet has fore-run many events are to happen at the conclusions of his plays; and sometimes so larly, that even the circumstances of calamity are minutely it, as in the instance of Juliet, who tells her lover from the , that he appears like one dead in the bottom of a tomb. The on that the genius of the mind gave an alarm before ap- g dissolution, is a very ancient one, and perhaps can never driven out: yet it must be allowed the merit of adding poetry, however injurious it may sometimes prove to the the superstitious. STEEVENS.

I will forestal their repair hither, and say, you are not fit.

HAM. Not a whit, we defy augury; there is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come: the readiness is all: Since no man, of aught he leaves, knows, what is't to leave betimes?^a Let be.

^a *Since no man, of aught he leaves, knows, what is't to leave betimes?*] The old quarto reads,—*Since no man, of aught he leaves, knows, what is't to leave betimes? Let be.* This is the true reading. Here the premises conclude right, and the argument drawn out at length is to this effect: "It is true, that, by death, we lose all the goods of life; yet seeing this loss is no otherwise an evil than as we are sensible of it, and since death removes all sense of it, what matters it how soon we lose them? Therefore come what will, I am prepared." WARBURTON.

The reading of the quarto was right, but in some other copy the harshness of the transposition was softened, and the passage stood thus:—*Since no man knows aught of what he leaves.* For *knows* was printed in the later copies *has*, by a slight blunder in such typographers.

I do not think Dr. Warburton's interpretation of the passage the best that it will admit. The meaning may be this,—*Since no man knows aught of the state of life which he leaves*, since he cannot judge what other years may produce, why should he be afraid of leaving life betimes? Why should he dread an early death, of which he cannot tell whether it is an exclusion of happiness, or an interception of calamity. I despise the superstition of augury and omens, which has no ground in reason or piety; my comfort is, that I cannot fall but by the direction of Providence.

Sir T. Hanmer has,—*Since no man owes aught*, a conjecture not very reprehensible. *Since no man can call any possession certain, what is it to leave?* JOHNSON.

Dr. Warburton has truly stated the reading of the first quarto, 1604. The folio reads,—*Since no man has aught of what he leaves, what is't to leave betimes?*

In the late editions neither copy has been followed. MALONE.

Enter King, Queen, LAERTES, Lords, OSRICK, and Attendants with foils, &c.

KING. Come, Hamlet, come, and take this hand from me.

[The King puts the band of LAERTES into that of HAMLET.]

HAM. Give me your pardon, fir:⁹ I have done you wrong;

But pardon it, as you are a gentleman.

This presence knows, and you must needs have heard,

How I am punish'd with a fore distraction.

What I have done,

That might your nature, honour, and exception,

Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.

Was't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes? Never, Hamlet:

If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,

And, when he's not himself, does wrong Laertes,

Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it.

Who does it then? His madness: If't be so,

Hamlet is of the faction that is wrong'd;

His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.

Sir,^a in this audience,

Let my disclaiming from a purpos'd evil

Free me so far in your most generous thoughts,

That I have shot my arrow o'er the house,

And hurt my brother.

⁹ *Give me your pardon, fir:]* I wish Hamlet had made some other fence; it is unsuitable to the character of a good or a brave man, shelter himself in falsehood. JOHNSON.

^a *Sir, &c.]* This passage I have restored from the folio.

STEEVENS.

LAER. I am satisfied in nature,³
 Whose motive, in this case, should stir me most
 To my revenge: but in my terms of honour,
 I stand aloof; and will no reconciliation,
 Till by some elder masters, of known honour,⁴
 I have a voice and precedent of peace,
 To keep my name ungor'd: But till that time,
 I do receive your offer'd love like love,
 And will not wrong it.

HAM. I embrace it freely;
 And will this brother's wager frankly play.—
 Give us the foils; come on.

LAER. Come, one for me.

HAM. I'll be your foil, Laertes; in mine ignorance

³ *I am satisfied in nature, &c.*] This was a piece of satire on fantastical honour. Though *nature* is satisfied, yet he will ask advice of older men of the sword, whether *artificial honour* ought to be contented with Hamlet's submission.

There is a passage somewhat similar in *The Maid's Tragedy*:

"*Evad.* Will you forgive me then?

"*Mei.* Stay, I must ask mine honour first." STEEVENS.

⁴ *Till by some elder masters, of known honour,*] This is said in allusion to an English custom. I learn from an ancient MS. of which the reader will find a more particular account in a note to *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Vol. III. p. 327, n. 3, that in Queen Elizabeth's time there were "four ancient masters of defence," in the city of London. They appear to have been the referees in many affairs of honour, and exacted tribute from all inferior practitioners of the art of fencing, &c. STEEVENS.

Our poet frequently alludes to English customs, and may have done so here, but I do not believe that gentlemen ever submitted points of honour to persons who exhibited themselves for money as prize-fighters on the publick stage; though they might appeal in certain cases to Raleigh, Essex, or Southampton, who from their high rank, their course of life, and established reputation, might with strict propriety be styled, "elder masters, of known honour."

MALONE.

PRINCE OF DENMARK. 345

Your skill shall, like a star i'the darkeſt night,
Stick fiery off indeed.

LAER. You mock me, fir.

HAM. No, by this hand.

KING. Give them the foils, young Ofrick.—
Couſin Hamlet,
You know the wager?

HAM. Very well, my lord;
Your grace hath laid the odds o'the weaker ſide.⁵

KING. I do not fear it; I have ſeen you both:—
But ſince he's better'd, we have therefore odds.⁶

LAER. This is too heavy, let me ſee another.

HAM. This likes me well: Theſe foils have all a
length? [*They prepare to play.*]

OSR. Ay, my good lord.

⁵ *Your grace hath laid the odds o' the weaker ſide.*] When the odds were on the ſide of Laertes, who was to hit Hamlet twelve times to nine, it was perhaps the author's ſlip. Sir T. Hanmer reads—

Your grace hath laid upon the weaker ſide. JOHNSON.

I ſee no reaſon for altering this paſſage. Hamlet conſiders the things *impon'd* by the King, as of more value than thoſe *impon'd* by Laertes; and therefore ſays, “that he had laid the odds on the weaker ſide.” M. MASON.

Hamlet either means, that what the king had laid was more valuable than what Laertes ſtaked; or that *the king hath made his bet, an advantage being given to the weaker party*. I believe the firſt is the true interpretation. In the next line but one the word *odds* certainly means *an advantage given to the party*, but here it may have a different ſenſe. This is not an uncommon practice with our poet. MALONE.

The king had wagered, on Hamlet, *ſix Barbary borſes*, againſt a few rapiers, poniards, &c. that is, about *twenty* to one. Theſe are the odds here meant. RITSON.

⁶ *But ſince he's better'd, we have therefore odds.*] Theſe odds were *twelve* to *nine* in favour of Hamlet, by Laertes giving him *three*. RITSON.

KING. Set me the stoups of wine¹ upon that table:—

If Hamlet give the first or second hit,
Or quit in answer of the third exchange,
Let all the battlements their ordnance fire;
The king shall drink to Hamlet's better breath;
And in the cup an union shall he throw,²

¹ — *the stoups of wine*—] A *stoup* is a kind of *flaggon*. See Vol. IV. p. 51, n. 2. STEEVENS.

Containing somewhat more than two quarts. MALONE.

Stoup is a common word in Scotland at this day, and denotes a pewter vessel, resembling our wine measure; but of no determinate quantity, *that* being ascertained by an adjunct, as *gallon-stoup*, *pint-stoup*, *mutchkin-stoup*, &c. The vessel in which they fetch or keep water is also called the *water-stoup*. A *stoup of wine* is therefore equivalent to a pitcher of wine. RITSON.

² *And in the cup an union shall he throw,*] In some editions,

And in the cup an onyx shall he throw.

This is a various reading in several of the old copies; but *union* seems to me to be the true word. If I am not mistaken, neither the *onyx*, nor *sardonyx*, are jewels which ever found place in an imperial crown. An *union* is the finest sort of pearl, and has its place in all crowns, and coronets. Besides, let us consider what the King says on Hamlet's giving Laertes the first hit:

“Stay, give me drink. Hamlet, this *pearl* is thine;

“Here's to thy health.”

Therefore, if an *union* be a *pearl*, and an *onyx* a gem, or stone, quite differing in its nature from *pearls*; the king saying, that Hamlet has earn'd the *pearl*, I think, amounts to a demonstration that it was an *union* pearl, which he meant to throw into the cup.

THEOBALD.

And in the cup an union shall he throw,] Thus the folio rightly. In the first quarto by the carelessness of the printer, for *union*, we have *unice*, which in the subsequent quarto copies was made *onyx*. An *union* is a very precious pearl. See Bullokar's *English Expositor*, 1616, and Florio's Italian Dictionary, 1598, in v. MALONE.

So, in *Soliman and Perseda*:

“Ay, were it Cleopatra's *union*.”

The *union* is thus mentioned in P. Holland's translation of *Pliny's Natural History*: “And hereupon it is that our dainties and delicacies here at Rome, &c. call them *unions*, as a man would say singular and by themselves alone.”

PRINCE OF DENMARK. 347

Richer than that which four successive kings
In Denmark's crown have worn; Give me the cups;
And let the kettle to the trumpet speak,
The trumpet to the cannoneer without,
The cannons to the heavens, the heaven to earth,
Now the king drinks to Hamlet.—Come, begin;—
And you, the judges, bear a wary eye.

HAM. Come on, fir.

LAER. Come. my lord. [They play.

HAM. One.

LAER. No.

HAM. Judgement.

OSR. A hit, a very palpable hit.

LAER. Well,—again.

KING. Stay, give me drink: Hamlet, this pearl
is thine;⁹

Here's to thy health.—Give him the cup.

[Trumpets sound; and cannon shot off within.

HAM. I'll play this bout first, set it by awhile.
Come.—Another hit; What say you? [They play.

To swallow a *pearl* in a draught seems to have been equally
common to royal and mercantile prodigality. So, in the Second
Part of *If you know not Me, you know Nobody*, 1606, Sir Thomas
Gresham says:

“Here 16,000 pound at one clap goes.

“Instead of sugar, Gresham *drinks this pearle*

“Unto his queen and mistress.”

It may be observed, however, that *pearls* were supposed to possess
an exhilarating quality. Thus, *Rondelet*, Lib. I. de Testac.
c. xv: “*Uniones quæ à conchis &c. valde cordiales sunt.*”

STEEVENS.

⁹ — *this pearl is thine;*] Under pretence of throwing a *pearl*
into the cup, the king may be supposed to drop some poisonous
drug into the wine. Hamlet seems to suspect this, when he after-
wards discovers the effects of the poison, and tauntingly asks him,—
“Is the union here?” STEEVENS.

LAER. A touch, a touch, I do confefs.

KING. Our fon fhall win.

QUEEN. He's fat, and fcant of breath.²—
Here, Hamlet, take my napkin, rub thy brows:
The queen caroufes to thy fortune, Hamlet.³

HAM. Good madam,—

KING. Gertrude, do not drink.

QUEEN. I will, my lord;—I pray you, pardon
me.

KING. It is the poifon'd cup; it is too late.

[*Aside.*]

HAM. I dare not drink yet, madam; by and by.

QUEEN. Come, let me wipe thy face.⁴

² Queen. *He's fat, and fcant of breath.*] It feems that *John Lowin*, who was the original *Falstaff*, was no lefs celebrated for his performance of *Henry VIII.* and *Hamlet*. See the *Historia Hiftrionica*, &c. If he was adapted, by the corpulence of his figure, to appear with propriety in the two former of thefe characters, Shakspeare might have put this obfervation into the mouth of her majesty, to apologize for the want of fuch elegance of perfon as an audience might expect to meet with in the representative of the youthful prince of Denmark, whom Ophelia fpeaks of as “the glafs of fafhion and the mould of form.” This, however, is mere conjecture, as *Joseph Taylor* likewife acted *Hamlet* during the life of Shakspeare. STEEVENS.

The author of *Historia Hiftrionica*, and Downes the prompter, concur in faying that Taylor was the performer of Hamlet. Roberts the player alone has asserted, (apparently without any authority,) that this part was performed by Lowin. MALONE.

³ *The queen caroufes to thy fortune, Hamlet.*] i. e. (in humbler language) drinks good luck to you. A fimilar phrafe occurs in *David and Bethfabe*, 1599:

“With full caroufes to his fortune paff.” STEEVENS.

⁴ *Come, let me wipe thy face.*] Thefe very words (the prefent repetition of which might have been fpared) are addreffed by Doll Tearſheet to Falstaff, when he was heated by his purſuit of Piftol. See Vol. IX. p. 95. STEEVENS.

PRINCE OF DENMARK. 349

LAER. My lord, I'll hit him now.

KING. I do not think it.

LAER. And yet it is almost against my conscience.
[*Aside.*]

HAM. Come, for the third, Laertes: You do
but dally;

I pray you, pass with your best violence;
I am afraid, you make a wanton of me.⁵

LAER. Say you so? come on. [They play.]

OSR. Nothing neither way.

LAER. Have at you now.

[**LAERTES** wounds **HAMLET**; then, in scuffling,
they change rapiers, and **HAMLET** wounds
LAERTES.]

KING. Part them, they are incens'd.

HAM. Nay, come again. [The Queen falls.]

OSR. Look to the queen there, ho!

HOR. They bleed on both sides:—How is it, my
lord?

OSR. How is't, Laertes?

⁵ —you make a wanton of me.] A wanton was a man feeble
and effeminate. In *Cymbeline*, Imogen says, I am not

“ —so citizen a wanton, as

“ To seem to die, ere sick.” JOHNSON.

Rather, you trifle with me as if you were playing with a child.
So, in *Romeo and Juliet*:

“ —I would have thee gone,

“ And yet no further than a wanton's bird,

“ That lets it hop a little from her hand,

“ And with a silk thread pulls it back again.” RITSON.

A passage in *King John* shows that wanton here means a man
feeble and effeminate, as Dr. Johnson has explained it:

“ —Shall a beardless boy,

“ A cocker'd filken wanton, brave our fields,

“ And flesh his spirit in a warlike foil,” &c. MALONE.

LAER. Why, as a woodcock to my own springe,
Ofrick;

I am justly kill'd with mine own treachery.

HAM. How does the queen?

KING. She swoons to see them bleed.

QUEEN. No, no, the drink, the drink,—O my
dear Hamlet!—

The drink, the drink;—I am poison'd! [*Dies.*

HAM. O villainy!—Ho! let the door be lock'd:
Treachery! seek it out. [*LAERTES falls.*

LAER. It is here, Hamlet: Hamlet, thou art
slain;

No medicine in the world can do thee good,
In thee there is not half an hour's life;
The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,
Unbated, and envenom'd: the foul practice
Hath turn'd itself on me; lo, here I lie,
Never to rise again: Thy mother's poison'd;
I can no more;—the king, the king's to blame.

HAM. The point
Envenom'd too!—Then, venom, to thy work.

[*Stabs the King.*

OSR. AND LORDS. Treason! treason!

KING. O, yet defend me, friends, I am but hurt.

HAM. Here, thou incestuous, murd'rous, damned
Dane,

Drink off this potion:—Is the union here?^s

Follow my mother. [*King dies.*

^s — *Is the union here?*] In this place likewise the quarto reads, an *onyx*. STEEVENS.

— *Is the union here?*] Thus the folio. In a former passage in the quarto, 1604, for *union* we had *unice*; here it has *onyx*.

It should seem from this line, and Laertes's next speech, that Hamlet here forces the expiring king to drink some of the poisoned cup, and that he dies while it is at his lips. MALONE.

PRINCE OF DENMARK. 351

LAER. He is justly serv'd;
It is a poison temper'd by himself.—
Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet:
Mine and my father's death come not upon thee;
Nor thine on me! [Dies.]

HAM. Heaven make thee free of it! I follow thee.
I am dead, Horatio:—Wretched queen, adieu!—
You that look pale and tremble at this chance,
That are but mutes or audience to this act,⁶
Had I but time, (as this fell sergeant, death,
Is strict in his arrest,)⁷ O, I could tell you,—
But let it be:—Horatio, I am dead;
Thou liv'st; report me and my cause aright
To the unsatisfied.

HOR. Never believe it;
I am more an antique Roman than a Dane,
Here's yet some liquor left.

HAM. As thou'rt a man,—
Give me the cup; let go; by heaven, I'll have it.—
O God!—Horatio,⁸ what a wounded name,
Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind
me?⁹
If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from felicity a while,

⁶ *That are but mutes or audience to this act,*] That are either mere auditors of this catastrophe, or at most only mute performers, that fill the stage without any part in the action. JOHNSON.

⁷ ——— (*as this fell sergeant, death, Is strict in his arrest,*)] So, in our poet's 74th Sonnet:

“ ——— when that fell arrest,
“ *Without all bail, shall carry me away,—*” MALONE.

A *serjeant* is a bailiff, or sheriff's officer. RITSON.

⁸ O God!—*Horatio, &c.*] Thus the quarto, 1604. Folio: O good Horatio. MALONE.

⁹ ——— *shall live behind me?*] Thus the folio. The quartos read—*shall I leave behind me.* STREVENSON.

And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
To tell my story.—

[*March afar off, and shot within.*
What warlike noise is this?

OSR. Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from
Poland,

To the ambassadors of England gives
This warlike volley.

HAM. O, I die, Horatio;
The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirit;¹
I cannot live to hear the news from England:
But I do prophecy, the election lights
On Fortinbras; he has my dying voice;

¹ *The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirit;*] Thus the first quarto, and the first folio. Alluding, I suppose, to a victorious cock exulting over his conquered antagonist. The same word occurs in *Lingua*, &c. 1607:

“ Shall I? th’ embassadrefs of gods and men,
“ That pull’d proud Phœbe from her brightsome sphere,
“ And dark’d Apollo’s countenance with a word,
“ Be *over-crow’d*, and breathe without revenge?”

Again, in Hall’s *Satires*, Lib. V. Sat. ii:

“ Like the vain bubble of Iberian pride,
“ That *over-croweth* all the world beside.”

This phrase often occurs in the controversial pieces of Gabriel Harvey, 1593, &c. STEEVENS.

This word, [*o’er-crowes*] for which Mr. Pope and succeeding editors have substituted *over-crowes*, is used by Holinshed in his *History of Ireland*: “ These noblemen laboured with tooth and nayle to *over-crowe*, and consequently to overthrow, one another.”

Again, in the epistle prefixed to Nashe’s *Apologie of Pierce Penniless*, 1593: “ About two yeeres since a certayne demi-divine took upon him to set his foote to mine, and *over-crowe* mee with comparative terms.”

I find the reading which Mr. Pope and the subsequent editors adopted, (*o’er-crowes*,) was taken from a late quarto of no authority, printed in 1637. MALONE.

The accepted reading is the more quaint, the rejected one, the more elegant of the two; at least Mr. Rowe has given the latter to his dying Ametris in *The Ambitious Stepmother*:

“ The gloom *grows o’er me*.” STEEVENS.

PRINCE OF DENMARK. 353

So tell him, with the occurrents,⁸ more and less,
Which have solicited,⁹—The rest is silence. [*Dies.*]

HOR. Now cracks a noble heart :—Good night,
sweet prince;
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!¹

⁸ — *the occurrents,*] i. e. incidents. The word is now dis-
used. So, in *The Hog bath lost his Pearl*, 1614:

“ Such strange *occurents* of my fore-past life.”

Again, in *The Barons' Wars*, by Drayton, Canto I:

“ With each *occurrent*, right in his degree.” STEEVENS.

⁹ Which have solicited,] *Solicited*, for brought on the event.

WARBURTON.

Warburton says that *solicited*, means *brought on the event*; but that is a meaning the word cannot import. That have *solicited*, means that have *excited*;—but the sentence is left imperfect.

M. MASON.

What Hamlet would have said, the poet has not given us any ground for conjecturing. The words seem to mean no more than — *which have incited me to*—. MALONE.

² Now cracks a noble heart :—Good night, sweet prince;

And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!] So, in *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, 1609:

“ If thou liv’st, Pericles, thou hast a heart,

“ That even cracks for woe.”

The concluding words of the unfortunate Lord Essex’s prayer on the scaffold were these: “ — and when my life and body shall part, send thy blessed angels, which may receive my soule, and convey it to the joys of heaven.”

Hamlet had certainly been exhibited before the execution of that amiable nobleman; but the words here given to Horatio might have been one of the many additions made to this play. As no copy of an earlier date than 1604 has yet been discovered, whether Lord Essex’s last words were in our author’s thoughts, cannot now be ascertained. MALONE.

And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!] Rather from Marston’s *Insatiate Countess*, 1603:

“ An host of angels be thy convey hence!”

STEEVENS.

Let us review for a moment the behaviour of Hamlet, on the strength of which Horatio founds this eulogy, and recommends him to the patronage of angels.

Why does the drum come hither? [*March within.*]

Hamlet, at the command of his father's ghost, undertakes with seeming alacrity to revenge the murder; and declares he will banish all other thoughts from his mind. He makes, however, but one effort to keep his word, and that is, when he mistakes Polonius for the king. On another occasion, he defers his purpose till he can find an opportunity of taking his uncle when he is least prepared for death, that he may insure damnation to his soul. Though he assassinated Polonius by accident, yet he deliberately procures the execution of his school-fellows, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, who appear not, from any circumstances in this play, to have been acquainted with the treacherous purposes of the mandate they were employed to carry. To embitter their fate, and hazard their punishment beyond the grave, he denies them even the few moments necessary for a brief confession of their sins. Their end (as he declares in a subsequent conversation with Horatio) gives him no concern, for they obtruded themselves into the service, and he thought he had a right to destroy them. From his brutal conduct toward Ophelia, he is not less accountable for her distraction and death. He interrupts the funeral designed in honour of this lady, at which both the king and queen were present; and, by such an outrage to decency, renders it still more necessary for the usurper to lay a second stratagem for his life, though the first had proved abortive. He insults the brother of the dead, and boasts of an affection for his sister, which, before, he had denied to her face; and yet at this very time must be considered as desirous of supporting the character of a madman, so that the openness of his confession is not to be imputed to him as a virtue. He apologizes to Horatio afterwards for the absurdity of this behaviour, to which, he says, he was provoked by that nobleness of fraternal grief, which, indeed, he ought rather to have applauded than condemned. Dr. Johnson has observed, that to bring about a reconciliation with Laertes, he has availed himself of a dishonest fallacy; and to conclude, it is obvious to the most careless spectator or reader, that he kills the king at last to revenge himself, and not his father.

Hamlet cannot be said to have pursued his ends by very warrantable means; and if the poet, when he sacrificed him at last, meant to have enforced such a moral, it is not the worst that can be deduced from the play; for, as *Maximus*, in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Valentinian*, says,

“ Although his justice were as white as truth,

“ His way was crooked to it; that condemns him.”

The late Dr. Akenfide once observed to me, that the conduct of Hamlet was every way unnatural and indefensible, unless he were to be regarded as a young man whose intellects were in some degree

Enter FORTINBRAS, the English Ambassadors, and Others.

FORT. Where is this fight?

HOR. What is it, you would see?

impaired by his own misfortunes; by the death of his father, the loss of expected sovereignty, and a sense of shame resulting from the hasty and incestuous marriage of his mother.

I have dwelt the longer on this subject, because Hamlet seems to have been hitherto regarded as a hero not undeserving the pity of the audience; and because no writer on Shakspeare has taken the pains to point out the immoral tendency of his character.

STEEVENS.

Mr. Ritson controverts the justice of Mr. Steevens's strictures on the character of Hamlet, which he undertakes to defend. The arguments he makes use of for this purpose are too long to be here inserted, and therefore I shall content myself with referring to them. See REMARKS, p. 217, to 224. REED.

Some of the charges here brought against Hamlet appear to me questionable at least, if not unfounded. I have already observed that in the novel on which this play is constructed, the ministers who by the king's order accompanied the young prince to England, and carried with them a packet in which his death was concerted, were apprized of its contents; and therefore we may *presume* that Shakspeare meant to describe their representatives, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, as equally criminal; as combining with the king to deprive Hamlet of his life. His procuring their execution therefore does not with certainty appear to have been an unprovoked *attack*, and *might* have been considered by him as necessary to his *future safety*; knowing, as he must have known, that they had devoted themselves to the service of the king in whatever he should command. The principle on which he acted, is ascertained by the following lines, from which also it may be inferred that the poet meant to represent Hamlet's school-fellows as privy to the plot against his life:

“ There's letters seal'd: and my two school-fellows—
 “ Whom I will trust as I will adders fang'd,
 “ They bear the mandate; they must sweep my way,
 “ And marshall me to knavery: Let it work;
 “ For 'tis the sport, to have the engineer

If aught of woe, or wonder, cease your search.

“ Hoist with his own petar; and it shall go hard,
 “ But I will delve one yard below *their* mines,
 “ And blow them to the moon.”

Another charge is, that “ *he comes* * to disturb the funeral of Ophelia:” but the fact is otherwise represented in the first scene of the fifth act: for when the funeral procession appears, (which he does not seek, but finds,) he exclaims,

“ The queen, the courtiers: *who is this they follow,*
 “ And with such maimed rites?”

nor does he know it to be the funeral of Ophelia, till Laertes mentions that the dead body was that of his sister.

I do not perceive that he is accountable for the madness of Ophelia. He did not mean to kill her father when concealed behind the arras, but the king; and still less did he intend to deprive her of her reason and her life: her subsequent distraction therefore can no otherwise be laid to his charge, than as an unforeseen consequence from his too ardently pursuing the object recommended to him by his father.

He appears to have been induced to leap into Ophelia's grave, not with a design to insult Laertes, but from his love to her, (which then he had no reason to conceal,) and from the *bravery of her brother's grief*, which excited him (not to condemn that brother, as has been stated, but) to *vie* with him in the expression of affection and sorrow:

“ Why, I will fight with him upon this theme,
 “ Until my eyelids will no longer wag.—
 “ I lov'd Ophelia; forty thousand brothers
 “ Could not with all their quantity of love
 “ Make up my sum.”

When Hamlet says, “ the bravery of his grief did put me into a *towering passion*,” I think, he means, into a lofty expression (not of *resentment*, but) of *grief*. So, in *King John*, Vol. VIII. p. 64, n. 9.

“ She is *sad* and *passionate* at your highness' tent.”

Again, more appositely in the play before us:

“ The instant burst of clamour that she made,
 “ (Unless things mortal move them not at all,)
 “ Would have made milch the burning eyes of heaven,
 “ And *passion* in the gods.”

I may also add, that he neither assaulted, nor insulted Laertes, till that nobleman had cursed him, and seized him by the throat.

MALONE.

* — *he comes*—] The words stood thus in edit. 1778, &c. STEEVENS.

PRINCE OF DENMARK. 357

FORR. This quarry cries on havock!³—O proud death!

What feast is toward in thine eternal cell,⁴
That thou so many princes, at a shot,
So bloodily hast struck?

I. AMB. The fight is dismal;
And our affairs from England come too late:
The ears are senseless, that should give us hearing,
To tell him, his commandment is fulfill'd,
That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead:
Where should we have our thanks?

HOR. Not from his mouth,⁵
Had it the ability of life to thank you;
He never gave commandment for their death.
But since, so jump upon this bloody question,
You from the Polack wars, and you from England,
Are here arriv'd; give order, that these bodies
High on a stage be placed to the view;⁶

³ *This quarry cries on havock!*] Sir T. Hanmer reads,
—— cries out, *havock!*

To cry on, was to exclaim against. I suppose, when unfair sportsmen destroyed more quarry or game than was reasonable, the censure was to cry, *Havock*. JOHNSON.

We have the same phraseology in *Othello*, Act V. sc. i:

“ —— Whose noise is this, that cries on murder?”

See the note there. MALONE.

⁴ *What feast is toward in thine eternal cell,*] Shakspeare has already employed this allusion to the *Chœæ*, or *feasts of the dead*, which were anciently celebrated at Athens, and are mentioned by Plutarch in the life of *Antonius*. Our author likewise makes *Talbot* say to his son in the First Part of *King Henry VI*:

“ Now art thou come unto a *feast of death*.”

STEEVENS.

⁵ —— *his mouth,*] i. e. the king's. STEEVENS.

⁶ —— *give order, that these bodies*

High on a stage be placed to the view;] This idea was ap-

And let me speak, to the yet unknowing world,
 How these things came about: So shall you hear
 Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts;⁷
 Of accidental judgements, casual slaughters;
 Of deaths put on⁸ by cunning, and forc'd cause;⁹
 And, in this upshot, purposes mistook
 Fall'n on the inventors' heads: all this can I
 Truly deliver.

For. Let us haste to hear it,
 And call the noblest to the audience.
 For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune;
 I have some rights of memory in this kingdom;¹
 Which now to claim my vantage doth invite me.

parently taken from Arthur Brooke's *Tragicall History of Romeo and Juliet*, 1562:

"The prince did straight ordaine, the corpes that wer founde,
 "Should be set forth upon a stage hye rayfed from the
 grounde," &c. STEEVENS.

⁷ Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts;] *Carnal* is a word used by Shakspere as an adjective to *carnage*. RITSON.

Of sanguinary and unnatural acts, to which the perpetrator was instigated by concupiscence, or, to use our poet's own words, by "*carnal stings*." The speaker alludes to the murder of old Hamlet by his brother, previous to his incestuous union with Gertrude. A Remarker asks, "was the relationship between the usurper and the deceased king a secret confined to Horatio?"—No, but the murder of Hamlet by Claudius was a secret which the young prince had imparted to Horatio, and had imparted to him alone; and to this it is he principally, though covertly, alludes.—*Carnal* is the reading of the only authentick copies, the quarto 1604, and the folio 1623. The modern editors, following a quarto of no authority, for *carnal*, read *cruel*. MALONE.

The edition immediately preceding that of Mr. Malone, reads—*carnal*, and not *cruel*, as here asserted. REED.

⁸ Of deaths put on—] i. e. instigated, produced. See Vol. XII. p. 109, n. 9. MALONE.

⁹ — and forc'd cause;] Thus the folio. The quartos read— and for no cause. STEEVENS.

¹ — some rights of memory in this kingdom,] Some rights, which are remembered in this kingdom. MALONE.

PRINCE OF DENMARK. 359

HOR. Of that I shall have also cause to speak,
And from his mouth whose voice will draw on
more:³

But let this same be presently perform'd,
Even while men's minds are wild; lest more mis-
chance,
On plots, and errors, happen.

FORT. Let four captains
Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage;
For he was likely, had he been put on,
To have prov'd most royally: and, for his passage,
The soldiers' musick, and the rites of war,
Speak loudly for him.—

Take up the bodies:—Such a fight as this
Becomes the field, but here shows much amiss.

Go, bid the soldiers shoot. [*A dead march.*]

[*Exeunt, bearing off the dead bodies; after which,
a peal of ordnance is shot off.*⁴]

³ *And from his mouth whose voice will draw on more:*] No is the reading of the old quartos, but certainly a mistaken one. We say, a man will no more draw breath; but that a man's voice will draw no more, is, I believe, an expression without any authority. I choose to espouse the reading of the elder folio:

And from his mouth whose voice will draw on more.

And this is the poet's meaning. Hamlet, just before his death, had said:

"But I do prophecy, the election lights

"On Fortinbras: he has my dying voice;

"So tell him," &c.

Accordingly, Horatio here delivers that message; and very justly infers, that Hamlet's voice will be seconded by others, and procure them in favour of Fortinbras's succession. **THEOBALD.**

⁴ If the dramas of Shakspeare were to be characterised, each by the particular excellence which distinguishes it from the rest, we must allow to the tragedy of Hamlet the praise of variety. The incidents are so numerous, that the argument of the play would make a long tale. The scenes are interchangeably diversified with merriment and solemnity; with merriment that includes judicious

and instructive observations; and solemnity not strained by poetical violence above the natural sentiments of man. New characters appear from time to time in continual succession, exhibiting various forms of life and particular modes of conversation. The pretended madness of Hamlet causes much mirth, the mournful distraction of Ophelia fills the heart with tenderness, and every personage produces the effect intended, from the apparition that in the first act chills the blood with horror, to the fop in the last, that exposes affectation to just contempt.

The conduct is perhaps not wholly secure against objections. The action is indeed for the most part in continual progression, but there are some scenes which neither forward nor retard it. Of the feigned madness of Hamlet there appears no adequate cause, for he does nothing which he might not have done with the reputation of sanity. He plays the madman most, when he treats Ophelia with so much rudeness, which seems to be useless and wanton cruelty.

Hamlet is, through the whole piece, rather an instrument than an agent. After he has, by the stratagem of the play, convicted the king, he makes no attempt to punish him; and his death is at last effected by an incident which Hamlet had no part in producing.

The catastrophe is not very happily produced; the exchange of weapons is rather an expedient of necessity, than a stroke of art. A scheme might easily be formed to kill Hamlet with the dagger, and Laertes with the bowl.

The poet is accused of having shown little regard to poetical justice, and may be charged with equal neglect of poetical probability. The apparition left the regions of the dead to little purpose; the revenge which he demands is not obtained, but by the death of him that was required to take it; and the gratification, which would arise from the destruction of an usurper and a murderer, is abated by the untimely death of Ophelia, the young, the beautiful, the harmless, and the pious. JOHNSON.

The levity of behaviour which Hamlet assumes immediately after the disappearance of the ghost in the first act, [*sc. v.*] has been objected to; but the writer of some sensible Remarks on this tragedy, published in 1736, justly observes, that the poet's object there was, that Marcellus "might not imagine that the ghost had revealed to Hamlet some matter of great consequence to him, and that he might not therefore be suspected of any deep design."

"I have heard (adds the same writer,) many persons wonder, why the poet should bring in this ghost in complete armour.—I think these reasons may be given for it. We are to consider, that he could introduce him in these dresses only; in his regal dress, in a habit of interment, in a common habit, or in some fantastick

one of his own invention. Now let us examine, which was most likely to affect the spectators with passions proper on the occasion.—

“ The regal habit has nothing uncommon in it, nor surprising, nor could it give rise to any fine images. The habit of interment was something too horrible; for terror, not horror, is to be raised in the spectators. The common habit (or *habit de ville*, as the French call it,) was by no means proper for the occasion. It remains then that the poet should choose some habit from his own brain: but this certainly could not be proper, because invention in such a case would be so much in danger of falling into the grotesque, that it was not to be hazarded.

“ Now as to the armour, it was very suitable to a king who is described as a great warrior, and is very particular; and consequently affects the spectators without being fantastick.—

“ The king spurs on his son to revenge his foul and unnatural murder, from these two considerations chiefly; that he was sent into the other world without having had time to repent of his sins, and without the necessary sacraments, according to the church of Rome, and that consequently his soul was to suffer, if not eternal damnation, at least a long course of penance in purgatory; which aggravates the circumstances of his brother's barbarity; and secondly, that Denmark might not be the scene of usurpation and incest, and the throne thus polluted and profaned. For these reasons he prompts the young prince to revenge; else it would have been more becoming the character of such a prince as Hamlet's father is represented to have been, and more suitable to his present condition, to have left his brother to the divine punishment, and to a possibility of repentance for his base crime, which, by cutting him off, he must be deprived of.

“ To conform to the ground-work of his plot, Shakspeare makes the young prince feign himself mad. I cannot but think this to be injudicious; for so far from securing himself from any violence which he feared from the usurper, it seems to have been the most likely way of getting himself confined, and consequently debarred from an opportunity of revenging his father's death, which now seemed to be his only aim; and accordingly it was the occasion of his being sent away to England; which design, had it taken effect upon his life, he never could have revenged his father's murder. To speak truth, our poet by keeping too close to the ground-work of his plot, has fallen into an absurdity; for there appears no reason at all in nature, why the young prince did not put the usurper to death as soon as possible, especially as Hamlet is represented as a youth so brave, and so careless of his own life.

“ The case indeed is this. Had Hamlet gone naturally to work, as we could suppose such a prince to do in parallel circumstances, there would have been an end of our play. The poet there-

fore was obliged to delay his hero's revenge: but then he should have contrived some good reason for it.

" His beginning his scenes of Hamlet's madness by his behaviour to Ophelia, was judicious, because by this means he might be thought to be mad for her, not that his brain was disturbed about state affairs, which would have been dangerous.

" It does not appear whether Ophelia's madness was chiefly for her father's death, or for the loss of Hamlet. It is not often that young women run mad for the loss of their fathers. It is more natural to suppose that, like *Chimene*, in the *Cid*, her great sorrow proceeded from her father's being killed by the man she loved, and thereby making it indecent for her ever to marry him.

" Laertes's character is a very odd one; it is not easy to say whether it is good or bad: but his consenting to the villainous contrivance of the usurper's to murder Hamlet, makes him much more a bad man than a good one.—It is a very nice conduct in the poet to make the usurper build his scheme upon the generous unsuspecting temper of the person he intends to murder, and thus to raise the prince's character by the confession of his enemy; to make the villain ten times more odious from his own mouth. The contrivance of the foil unbated, (i. e. without a button,) is methinks too gross a deceit to go down even with a man of the most unsuspecting nature.

" Laertes's death and the queen's are truly poetical justice, and very naturally brought about, although I do not conceive it so easy to change rapiers in a scuffle without knowing it at the time. The death of the queen is particularly according to the strictest rules of poetical justice; for she loses her life by the villainy of the very person, who had been the cause of all her crimes.

" Since the poet deferred so long the usurper's death, we must own that he has very naturally effected it, and still added fresh crimes to those the murderer had already committed.

" Upon Laertes's repentance for contriving the death of Hamlet, one cannot but feel some sentiments of pity for him; but who can see or read the death of the young prince without melting into tears and compassion? Horatio's earnest desire to die with the prince, thus not to survive his friend, gives a stronger idea of his friendship for Hamlet in the few lines on that occasion, than many actions or expressions could possibly have done. And Hamlet's begging him *to draw his breath in this harsh world* a little longer, to clear his reputation, and manifest his innocence, is very suitable to his virtuous character, and the honest regard that all men should have not to be misrepresented to posterity; that they may not set a bad example, when in reality they have set a good one: which is the only motive that can, in reason, recommend the love of fame and glory.

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“ Horatio’s desire of having the bodies carried to a stage, &c. is very well imagined, and was the best way of satisfying the request of his deceased friend: and he acts in this, and in all points, suitably to the manly honest character, under which he is drawn throughout the piece. Besides, it gives a sort of content to the audience, that though their favourite (which must be Hamlet) did not escape with life, yet the greatest amends will be made him, which can be in this world, viz. justice done to his memory.

“ Fortinbras comes in very naturally at the close of the play, and lays a very just claim to the throne of Denmark, as he had the dying voice of the prince. He in a few words gives a noble character of Hamlet, and serves to carry off the deceased hero from the stage with the honours due to his birth and merit.” MALONE.

ACT II. SCENE II.

The rugged Pyrrhus, he, &c.] The two greatest poets of this and the last age, Mr. Dryden, in the preface to *Troilus and Cressida*, and Mr. Pope, in his note on this place, have concurred in thinking that Shakspeare produced this long passage with design to ridicule and expose the bombast of the play from whence it was taken; and that Hamlet’s commendation of it is purely ironical. This is become the general opinion. I think just otherwise; and that it was given with commendation to upbraid the false taste of the audience of that time, which would not suffer them to do justice to the simplicity and sublime of this production. And I reason, first, from the character Hamlet gives of the play, from whence the passage is taken. Secondly, from the passage itself. And thirdly, from the effect it had on the audience.

Let us consider the character Hamlet gives of it. *The play I remember, pleased not the million; ’twas caviare to the general: but it was (as I received it, and others, whose judgement in such matters cried in the top of mine) an excellent play, well digested in the scenes, set down with as much modesty as cunning. I remember one said, there was no salt in the lines to make the matter savoury; nor no matter in the phrase that might indite the author of affection; but called it an honest method.* They who suppose the passage given to be ridiculed, must needs suppose this character to be

purely ironical. But if so, it is the strangest irony that ever was written. *It pleased not the multitude.* This we must conclude to be true, however ironical the rest be. Now the reason given of the designed ridicule is the supposed bombast. But those were the very plays, which at that time we know took with the multitude. And Fletcher wrote a kind of *Rehearsal* purposely to expose them. But say it is bombast, and that therefore it took not with the multitude. Hamlet presently tells us what it was that displeased them. *There was no salt in the lines to make the matter savoury; nor no matter in the phrase that might indite the author of affection; but call'd it an honest method.* Now whether a person speaks ironically or no, when he quotes others, yet common sense requires he should quote what they say. Now it could not be, if this play displeased because of the bombast, that those whom it displeased should give this reason for their dislike. The same inconsistencies and absurdities abound in every other part of Hamlet's speech, supposing it to be ironical; but take him as speaking his sentiments, the whole is of a piece; and to this purpose. The play, I remember, pleased not the multitude, and the reason was, its being wrote on the rules of the ancient drama; to which they were entire strangers. But, in my opinion, and in the opinion of those for whose judgement I have the highest esteem, it was an excellent play, *well digested in the scenes*, i. e. where the three unities were well preserved. *Set down with as much modesty as cunning*, i. e. where not only the art of composition, but the simplicity of nature, was carefully attended to. The characters were a faithful picture of life and manners, in which nothing was overcharged into farce. But these qualities, which gained my esteem, lost the publick's. For I remember, one said, *There was no salt in the lines to make the matter savoury*, i. e. there was not, according to the mode of that time, a fool or clown, to joke, quibble, and talk freely. *Nor no matter in the phrase that might indite the author of affection*, i. e. not none of those passionate, pathetick love scenes, so essential to modern tragedy. *But he call'd it an honest method*, i. e. he owned, however *tasteless* this method of writing, on the ancient plan, was to our times, yet it was chaste and pure; the distinguishing character of the Greek drama. I need only make one observation on all this; that, thus interpreted, it is the justest picture of a good tragedy, wrote on the ancient rules. And that I have rightly interpreted it, appears farther from what we find in the old quarto,—*An honest method, as wholesome as sweet, and by very much more HANDSOME than FINE*, i. e. it had a natural beauty, but none of the fucus of false art.

2. A second proof that this speech was given to be admired, is from the intrinsic merit of the speech itself; which contains the description of a circumstance very happily imagined, namely,

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Ilium and Priam's falling together, with the effect it had on the destroyer.

—*The bellifß Pyrrhus, &c.*

To, *Repugnant to command.*

The unnerved father falls, &c.

To, — *So after Pyrrhus' pause.*

Now this circumstance, illustrated with the fine similitude of the storm, is so highly worked up, as to have well deserved a place in Virgil's second book of the *Æneid*, even though the work had been carried on to that perfection which the Roman poet had conceived.

3. The third proof is, from the effects which followed on the recital. Hamlet, his best character, approves it; the player is deeply affected in repeating it; and only the foolish Polonius tired with it. We have said enough before of Hamlet's sentiments. As for the player, he changes colour, and the tears start from his eyes. But our author was too good a judge of nature to make bombast and unnatural sentiment produce such an effect. Nature and Horace both instructed him:

Si vis me flere, dolendum est

Primum ipsi tibi, tunc tua me infortunia lædent,

Telephe, vel Peleu. MALE SI MANDATA LOQUERIS,

Aut dormitabo aut ridebo.

And it may be worth observing, that Horace gives this precept particularly to show, that bombast and unnatural sentiments are incapable of moving the tender passions, which he is directing the poet how to raise. For, in the lines just before, he gives this rule:

Telephus & Peleus, cum pauper & exul uterque,

Projicit ampullas, & sesquipedalia verba.

Not that I would deny, that very bad lines in bad tragedies have had this effect. But then it always proceeds from one or other of these causes.

1. Either when the subject is domestic, and the scene lies at home; the spectators, in this case, become interested in the fortunes of the distressed; and their thoughts are so much taken up with the subject, that they are not at liberty to attend to the poet; who otherwise, by his faulty sentiments and diction, would have stifled the emotions springing up from a sense of the distress. But this is nothing to the case in hand. For, as Hamlet says:

What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba?

2. When bad lines raise this affection, they are bad in the other extreme; low, abject, and groveling, instead of being highly figurative and swelling; yet, when attended with a natural simplicity, they have force enough to strike illiterate and simple minds. The tragedies of Banks will justify both these observations.

But if any one will still say, that Shakspeare intended to represent a player unnaturally and fantastically affected, we must appeal to Hamlet, that is, to Shakspeare himself in this matter; who, on the reflection he makes upon the player's emotion, in order to excite his own revenge, gives not the least hint that the player was unnaturally or injudiciously moved. On the contrary, his fine description of the actor's emotion shows, he thought just otherwise:

——— *this player here,*
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit,
That from her working all his visage wan'd:
Tears in his eyes, distraction in his aspect,
A broken voice, &c.

And indeed had Hamlet esteemed this emotion any thing unnatural, it had been a very improper circumstance to spur him to his purpose.

As Shakspeare has here shown the effects which a fine description of nature, heightened with all the ornaments of art, had upon an intelligent player, whose business habituates him to enter intimately and deeply into the characters of men and manners, and to give nature its free workings on all occasions; so he has artfully shown what effects the very same scene would have upon a quite different man, Polonius; *by nature*, very weak and very artificial [two qualities, though commonly enough joined in life, yet generally so much disguised as not to be seen by common eyes to be together; and which an ordinary poet durst not have brought so near one another]; *by discipline*, practised in a species of wit and eloquence, which was stiff, forced, and pedantic; and *by trade* a politician, and therefore, of consequence, without any of the affecting notices of humanity. Such is the man whom Shakspeare has judiciously chosen to represent the false taste of that audience which had condemned the play here reciting. When the actor comes to the finest and most pathetic part of the speech, Polonius cries out *This is too long*; on which Hamlet, in contempt of his ill judgement, replies, *It shall to the barber's with thy beard*; intimating that, by this judgement, it appeared that all his wisdom lay in his length of beard]. *Pr'ythee, say on. He's for a jig or a tale of bawdry* [the common entertainment of that time, as well as this, of the people] *or he sleeps; say on.* And yet this man of modern taste, who stood all this time perfectly unmoved with the forcible imagery of the relator, no sooner hears, amongst many good things, one quaint and fantastical word, put in, I suppose, purposely for this end, than he professes his approbation of the propriety and dignity of it. *That's good. Mould-worm is good.* On the whole then, I think, it plainly appears,

that the long quotation is not given to be ridiculed and laughed at, but to be admired. The character given of the play, by Hamlet, cannot be ironical. The passage itself is extremely beautiful. It has the effect that all pathetick relations, naturally written, should have; and it is condemned, or regarded with indifference, by one of a wrong, unnatural taste. From hence (to observe it by the way) the actors, in their representation of this play, may learn how this speech ought to be spoken, and what appearance Hamlet ought to assume during the recital.

That which supports the common opinion, concerning this passage, is the turgid expression in some parts of it; which, they think, could never be given by the poet to be commended. We shall therefore, in the next place, examine the lines most obnoxious to censure, and see how much, allowing the charge, this will make for the induction of their conclusion:

*Pyrrhus at Priam drives, in rage strikes wide,
But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword
The unnerved father falls.*

And again,

*Out, out, thou strumpet fortune! All you gods,
In general synod, take away her power:
Break all the spokes and fellies from her wheel,
And bowl the round nave down the hill of heaven,
As low as to the fiends.*

Now whether these be bombast or not, is not the question; but whether Shakspeare esteemed them so. That he did not so esteem them appears from his having used the very same thoughts in the same expressions, in his best plays, and given them to his principal characters, where he aims at the sublime. As in the following passages:

Troilus, in *Troilus and Cressida*, far outstrains the execution of Pyrrhus's sword in the character he gives of Hector's:

*"When many times the captive Grecians fall
Even in the fan and wind of your fair sword,
You bid them rise and live."*

Cleopatra, in *Antony and Cleopatra*, rails at fortune in the same manner:

*"No, let me speak, and let me rail so high,
That the false huswife Fortune break her wheel,
Provok'd at my offence."*

But another use may be made of these quotations; a discovery of this recited play: which, letting us into a circumstance of our author's life (as a writer) hitherto unknown, was the reason I have been so large upon this question. I think then it appears, from what has been said, that the play in dispute was Shakspeare's own; and that this was the occasion of writing it. He was desirous, as

soon as he had found his strength, of restoring the chasteness and regularity of the ancient stage: and therefore composed this tragedy on the model of the Greek drama, as may be seen by throwing so much *action* into *relation*. But his attempt proved fruitless; and the raw, unnatural taste, then prevalent, forced him back again into his old Gothic manner. For which he took this revenge upon his audience. **WARBURTON.**

I formerly thought that the lines which have given rise to the foregoing observations, were extracted from some old play, of which it appeared to me probable that Christopher Marlowe was the author; but whatever Shakspeare's view in producing them may have been, I am now decidedly of opinion they were written by himself, not in any former unsuccessful piece, but expressly for the play of *Hamlet*. It is observable that what Dr. Warburton calls "the fine similitude of the storm," is likewise found in our poet's *Venus and Adonis*. **MALONE.**

The praise which Hamlet bestows on this piece is certainly dissembled, and agrees very well with the character of madness, which, before witnesses, he thought it necessary to support. The speeches before us have so little merit, that nothing but an affectation of singularity, could have influenced Dr. Warburton to undertake their defence. The poet, perhaps, meant to exhibit a just resemblance of some of the plays of his own age, in which the faults were too general and too glaring to permit a few splendid passages to atone for them. The player knew his trade, and spoke the lines in an affecting manner, because Hamlet had declared them to be pathetic, or might be in reality a little moved by them; for, "There are less degrees of nature (says Dryden) by which some faint emotions of pity and terror are raised in us, as a less engine will raise a less proportion of weight, though not so much as one of Archimedes' making." The mind of the prince, it must be confessed, was fitted for the reception of gloomy ideas, and his tears were ready at a slight solicitation. It is by no means proved, that Shakspeare has employed the same thoughts clothed in the same expressions, in his best plays. If he bids the false kinswife Fortune break her wheel, he does not desire her to break all its spokes; nay, even its periphery, and make use of the nave afterwards for such an immeasurable cast. Though if what Dr. Warburton has said should be found in any instance to be exactly true, what can we infer from thence, but that Shakspeare was sometimes wrong in spite of conviction, and in the hurry of writing committed those very faults which his judgement could detect in others? Dr. Warburton is inconsistent in his assertions concerning the literature of Shakspeare. In a note on *Trissila and Cressida*, he affirms, that his want of learning kept him from being acquainted with the writings of Homer; and, in this instance, would suppose him capable of producing a complete tragedy written

on the ancient rules; and that the speech before us had sufficient merit to entitle it to a place in the second book of Virgil's *Æneid*, even though the work had been carried to that perfection which the Roman poet had conceived.*

Had Shakspeare made one unsuccessful attempt in the manner of the ancients (that he had any knowledge of their rules, remains to be proved,) it would certainly have been recorded by contemporary writers, among whom Ben Jonson would have been the first. Had his darling ancients been unskilfully imitated by a rival poet, he would at least have preserved the memory of the fact, to show how unsafe it was for any one, who was not as thorough a scholar as himself, to have meddled with their sacred remains.

"Within that circle none durst walk but he." He has represented Inigo Jones as being ignorant of the very names of those classical authors, whose architecture he undertook to correct; in his *Poetaster* he has in several places hinted at our poet's injudicious use of words, and seems to have pointed his ridicule more than once at some of his descriptions and characters. It is true that he has praised him, but it was not while that praise could have been of any service to him; and posthumous applause is always to be had on easy conditions. Happy it was for Shakspeare, that he took nature for his guide, and, engaged in the warm pursuit of her beauties, left to Jonson the repositories of learning: so has he escaped a contest which might have rendered his life uneasy, and bequeathed to our possession the more valuable copies from nature herself: for Shakspeare was (says Dr. Hurd, in his notes on Horace's Art of Poetry) "the first that broke through the bondage of classical superstition. And he owed this felicity, as he did some others, to his want of what is called the advantage of a learned education. Thus uninfluenced by the weight of early prepossession, he struck at once into the road of nature and common sense: and without designing, without knowing it, hath left us in his historical plays, with all their anomalies, an exacter resemblance of the Athenian stage than is any where to be found in its most professed admirers and copyists." Again, *ibid*: "It is possible, there are, who think us want of reading, as well as vast superiority of genius, hath con-

* It appears to me not only that Shakspeare had the favourable opinion of these lines which he makes Hamlet express, but that they were extracted from some play which he, at a more early period, had either produced or projected upon the story of *Dido and Æneas*. The verses recited are far superior to those of any coeval writer: the parallel passage in Marlowe and Nashe's *Dido* will not bear the comparison. Possibly, indeed, it might have been his first attempt, before the divinity that ledg'd within him had instructed him to despise the tumid and unnatural style so much and so unjustly admired in his predecessors or contemporaries, and which he afterward so happily ridiculed in "the swaggering vaine of Ancient Pistol." RITSON.

tributed to lift this astonishing man, to the glory of being esteemed the most original THINKER and SPEAKER, since the times of Homer."

To this extract I may add the sentiments of Dr. Edward Young on the same occasion. "Who knows whether Shakspeare might not have thought less, if he had read more? Who knows if he might not have laboured under the load of Jonson's learning, as Enceladus under Ætna? His mighty genius, indeed, through the most mountainous oppression would have breathed out some of his inextinguishable fire; yet possibly, he might not have risen up into that giant, that much more than common man, at which we now gaze with amazement and delight. Perhaps he was as learned as his dramattick province required; for whatever other learning he wanted, he was master of two books, which the last conflagration alone can destroy; the book of nature, and that of man. These he had by heart, and has transcribed many admirable pages of them into his immortal works. These are the fountain-head, whence the Castalian streams of *original* composition flow; and these are often mudded by other waters, though waters in their distinct channel, most wholesome and pure; as two chemical liquors, separately clear as crystal, grow foul by mixture, and offend the sight. So that he had not only as much learning as his dramattick province required, but, perhaps as it could safely bear. If Milton had spared some of his learning, his muse would have gained more glory than he would have lost by it."

Conjectures on Original Composition.

The first remark of Voltaire on this tragedy, is that the former king had been poisoned by his brother and *his queen*. The guilt of the latter, however, is far from being ascertained. The Ghost forbears to accuse her as an accessory, and very forcibly recommends her to the mercy of her son. I may add, that her conscience appears undisturbed during the exhibition of the mock tragedy, which produces so visible a disorder in her husband who was really criminal. The last observation of the same author has no greater degree of veracity to boast of; for now, says he, all the actors in the piece are swept away, and one Monsieur Fortenbras is introduced to conclude it. Can this be true, when Horatio, Osrick, Voltimand, and Cornelius survive? These, together with the whole court of Denmark, are supposed to be present at the catastrophe, so that we are not indebted to the Norwegian chief for having kept the stage from vacancy.

Monsieur de Voltaire has since transmitted, in an epistle to the Academy of Belles Lettres, some remarks on the late French translation of Shakspeare; but, alas! no traces of genius or vigour are discoverable in this *crambe repetita*, which is notorious only for its insipidity, fallacy, and malice. It serves indeed to show an appa-

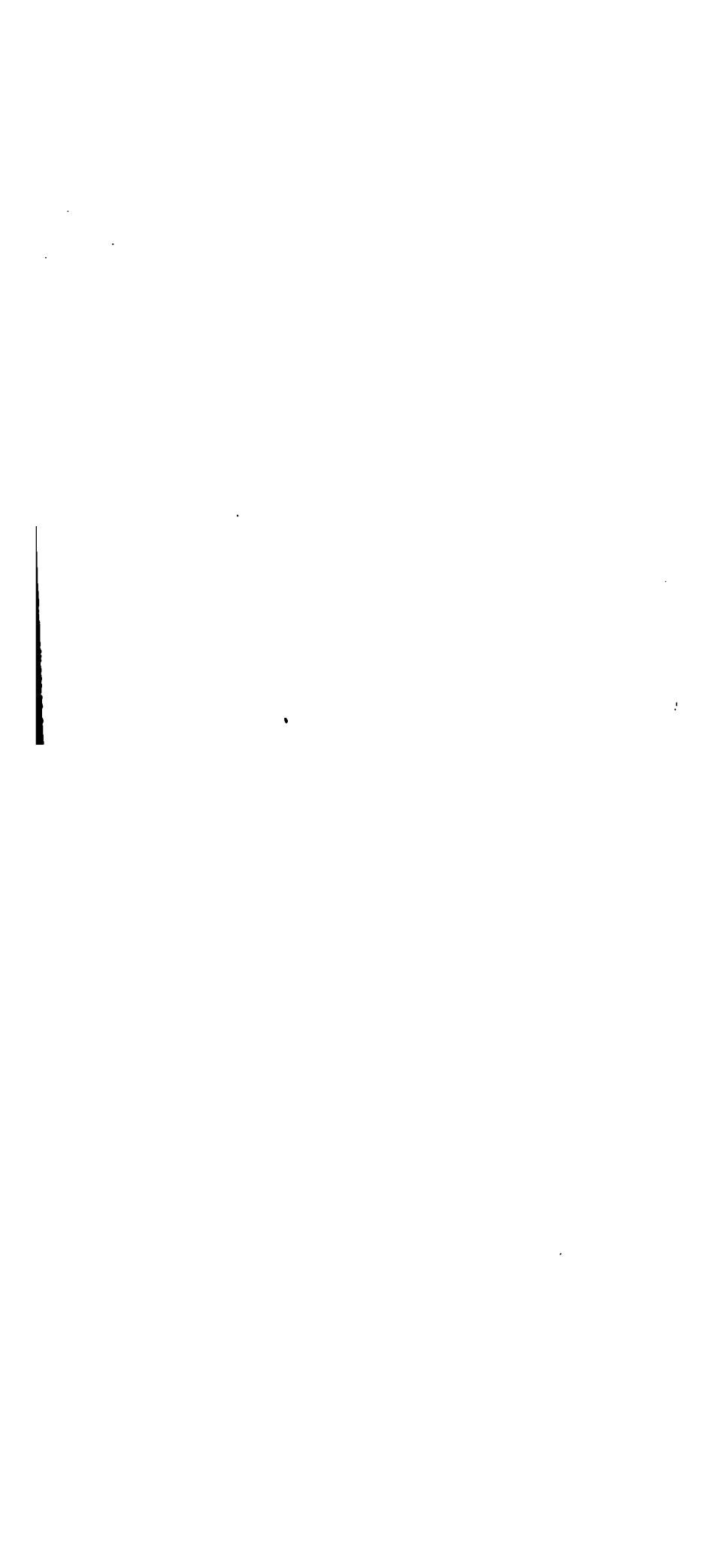
rent decline of talents and spirit in its writer, who no longer relies on his own ability to depreciate a rival, but appeals in a plaintive strain to the queen and princesses of France for their assistance to stop the further circulation of Shakspeare's renown.

Impartiality, nevertheless, must acknowledge that his private correspondence displays a superior degree of animation. Perhaps an ague shook him when he appealed to the publick on this subject; but the effects of a fever seem to predominate in his subsequent letter to Monsieur D'Argenteuil on the same occasion; for such a letter it is as our John Dennis (while his frenzy lasted) might be supposed to have written. "C'est moi qui autrefois parlai le premier de ce Shakspeare : c'est moi qui le premier montrai aux François quelques perles quels j'avois trouvé dans son enorme *fumier*." Mrs. Montague, the justly celebrated authoress of the *Essay on the genius and writings* of our author, was in Paris, and in the circle where these ravings of the Frenchman were first publickly recited. On hearing the illiberal expression already quoted, with no less elegance than readiness she replied—"C'est un *fumier* qui a fertilisé une terre bien ingrate."—In short, the author of *Zayre*, *Mabomet*, and *Semiramis*, possesses all the mischievous qualities of a midnight felon, who, in the hope to conceal his guilt, sets the house he has robbed on fire.

As for Messieurs D'Alembert and Marmontel, they might safely be passed over with that neglect which their impotence of criticism deserves. Voltaire, in spite of his natural disposition to vilify an English poet, by adopting sentiments, characters, and situations from Shakspeare, has bestowed on him involuntary praise. Happily, he has not been disgraced by the worthless encomiums or disfigured by the awkward imitations of the other pair, who "follow in the chace not like hounds that hunt, but like those who fill up the cry." When D'Alembert declares that more sterling sense is to be met with in ten French verses than in thirty English ones, contempt is all that he provokes,—such contempt as can only be exceeded by that which every scholar will express, who may chance to look into the prose translation of Lucan by Marmontel, with the vain expectation of discovering either the sense, the spirit or the whole of the original. STEEVENS.



O T H E L L O.*



* OTHELLO.] The story is taken from *Cymbio's Novels*.

POPE.

I have not hitherto met with any translation of this novel (the seventh in the third decad) of so early a date as the age of Shakspeare; but undoubtedly many of those little pamphlets have perished between his time and ours.

It is highly probable that our author met with the name of *Othello* in some tale that has escaped our researches; as I likewise find it in *God's Revenge against Adultery*, standing in one of his Arguments as follows: "She marries *Othello*, an old German soldier." This History (the eighth) is professed to be an *Italian* one. Here also occurs the name of *Iago*.

It may indeed be urged that these names were adopted from the tragedy before us: but I trust that every reader who is conversant with the peculiar style and method in which the work of honest John Reynolds is composed, will acquit him of the slightest familiarity with the scenes of Shakspeare.

This play was first entered at Stationers' Hall, Oct. 6, 1621, by Thomas Walkely. STEEVENS.

I have seen a French translation of *Cymbio*, by Gabriel Chappuys, Par. 1584. This is not a faithful one; and I suspect, through this medium the work came into English. FARMER.

This tragedy I have ascribed (but on no very sure ground) to the year 1611. See *An Attempt to ascertain the order of Shakspeare's Plays*, Vol. I. MALONE.

The time of this play may be ascertained from the following circumstances: Selymus the Second formed his design against Cyprus in 1569, and took it in 1571. This was the only attempt the Turks ever made upon that island after it came into the hands of the Venetians, (which was in the year 1473,) wherefore the time must fall in with some part of that interval. We learn from the play that there was a junction of the Turkish fleet at Rhodes, in order for the invasion of Cyprus, that it first came sailing towards Cyprus, then went to Rhodes, there met another squadron, and then resumed its way to Cyprus. These are real historical facts which happened when Mustapha, Selymus's general, attacked Cyprus in May, 1570, which therefore is the true period of this performance. See *Knolles's History of the Turks*, p. 838, 846, 867.

REED.

PERSONS represented,

Duke of Venice.

Brabantio, a Senator.

Two other Senators.

Gratiano, brother to Brabantio.

Lodovico, kinsman to Brabantio.

Othello, the Moor :

Cassio, his Lieutenant ;

Iago, his Ancient.

Roderigo, a Venetian Gentleman.

*Montano, Othello's predecessor in the government of Cyprus.**

Clown, servant to Othello.

Herald.

Desdemona, daughter to Brabantio, and wife to Othello.

Emilia, wife to Iago.

Bianca, a courtesan, mistress to Cassio.

Officers, Gentlemen, Messengers, Musicians, Sailors, Attendants, &c.

SCENE, for the first Act, in Venice ; during the rest of the play, at a sea-port in Cyprus.

* Though the rank which Montano held in Cyprus, cannot be exactly ascertained, yet from many circumstances, we are sure he had not the powers with which Othello was subsequently invested.

Perhaps we do not receive any one of the *Persons Dramatis* to Shakspeare's Plays, as it was originally drawn up by himself. These appendages are wanting to all the quartos, and are very rarely given in the folio. At the end of this play, however, the following enumeration of persons occurs :

" The names of the actors.—Othello, the Moore.—Brabantio, Father to Desdemona.—Cassio, an Honourable Lieutenant.—Iago, a Villaine.—Rodorigo, a gull'd Gentleman.—Duke of Venice.—Senators.—Montano, Governour of Cyprus.—Gentlemen of Cyprus.—Lodovico, and Gratiano, two noble Venetians.—Sailors.—Clown.—Desdemona, Wife to Othello.—Æmilia, Wife to Iago.—Bianca, a Courtesan." STEEVENS.

O T H E L L O,

THE MOOR OF VENICE.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Venice. *A Street.*

Enter RODERIGO and IAGO.

Rod. Tush, never tell me,² I take it much unkindly,
That thou, Iago,—who hast had my purse,
As if the strings were thine,—should'st know of this.

IAGO. 'Sblood, but you will not hear me:³—
If ever I did dream of such a matter,
Abhor me.

ROD. Thou told'st me, thou didst hold him in
thy hate.

IAG. Despise me, if I do not. Three great ones
of the city,
In personal suit to make me his lieutenant,
Oft capp'd to him;⁴—and, by the faith of man,

² *Tush, never tell me,*] Thus the quarto, 1622. The folio omits the interjection—*Tush*. STEEVENS.

³ *'Sblood, but you will not &c.*] Thus the quarto: the folio suppresses this oath. STEEVENS.

⁴ *Oft capp'd to him;*] Thus the quarto. The folio reads,—*Off-capp'd to him*. STEEVENS.

In support of the folio, *Antony and Cleopatra* may be quoted:

“ I have ever held my *cap off* to thy fortunes.”

This reading I once thought to be the true one. But a more

I know my price, I am worth no worse a place:
 But he, as loving his own pride and purposes,
 Evades them, with a bombast circumstance,⁵
 Horribly stuff'd with epithets of war;
 And, in conclusion, nonsums
 My mediators; *for, certes,*⁶ says he,
I have already chose my officer.
 And what was he?
 Forsooth, a great arithmetician,⁷
 One Michael Cassio, a Florentine,⁸

intimate knowledge of the quarto copies has convinced me that they ought not without very strong reason to be departed from.

MALONE.

To *cap* is to salute by taking off the cap. It is still an academic phrase. M. MASON.

⁵ — *a bombast circumstance,*] *Circumstance* signifies *circumlocution*. So, in Greene's *Tu Quoque*:

“ You put us to a needlets labour, sir,

“ To run and wind about for *circumstance*,

“ When the plain word, I thank you, would have serv'd.”

Again, in *Massinger's Picture*:

“ And therefore, without *circumstance*, to the point,

“ Instruct me what I am.”

Again, in Knolles's *History of the Turks*, p. 576: “ — wherefore I will not use many words to persuade you to continue in your fidelity and loyalty; neither long *circumstance* to encourage you to play the men.” REED.

⁶ — *certes,*] i. e. certainly, in truth. Obsolete. So, Spenser, in *The Faery Queen*, Book IV. c. ix:

“ *Certes* her losse ought me to sorrow most.”

STEEVENS.

⁷ *Forsooth, a great arithmetician,*] So, in *Romeo and Juliet*, Mercutio says: “ — one that fights by the book of *arithmetick*.”

STEEVENS.

Iago, however, means to represent Cassio, not as a person whose arithmetick was “ *one, two, and the third in your bosom,*” but as a man merely conversant with *civil* matters, and who knew no more of a squadron than the *number* of men it contained. So afterwards he calls him this *counter-caster*. MALONE.

⁸ — *a Florentine,*] It appears from many passages of this play (rightly understood) that Cassio was a Florentine, and Iago a Venetian. HANMER.

A fellow almost damn'd in a fair wife; ⁹

⁹ *A fellow almost damn'd in a fair wife;*] Sir Thomas Hanmer supposed that the text must be corrupt, because it appears from a following part of the play that Cassio was an unmarried man. Mr. Steevens has clearly explained the words in the subsequent note: I have therefore no doubt that the text is right; and have not thought it necessary to insert Mr. Tyrwhitt's note, in which he proposed to read—"a fellow almost damn'd in a fair life." Shakspeare, he conceived, might allude to the judgement denounced in the gospel against those of whom all men speak well. MALONE.

Mr. Tyrwhitt's conjecture is ingenious, but cannot be right; for the malicious Iago would never have given Cassio the highest commendation that words can convey, at the very time that he wishes to depreciate him to Roderigo: though afterwards, in speaking to himself, [Act V. sc. i.] he gives him his just character.

M. MASON.

That Cassio was *married* is not sufficiently implied in the words, *a fellow almost damn'd in a fair wife*, since they may mean, according to Iago's licentious manner of expressing himself, no more than a man *very near being married*. This seems to have been the case in respect of Cassio.—Act IV. sc. i, Iago speaking to him of Bianca, says,—*Why, the cry goes, that you shall marry her*. Cassio acknowledges that such a report had been raised, and adds, *This is the monkey's own giving out: she is persuaded I will marry her, out of her own love and self-flattery, not out of my promise*. Iago then, having heard this report before, very naturally circulates it in his present conversation with Roderigo. If Shakspeare, however, designed Bianca for a courtesan of Cyprus, (where Cassio had not yet been, and had therefore never seen her,) Iago cannot be supposed to allude to the report concerning his marriage with her, and consequently this part of my argument must fall to the ground.

Had Shakspeare, consistently with Iago's character, meant to make him say that Cassio was *actually damn'd in being married to a handsome woman*, he would have made him say it *outright*, and not have interposed the palliative *almost*. Whereas what he says at present amounts to no more than that (however near his marriage) he is not yet *completely damn'd*, because he is not *absolutely married*. The succeeding parts of Iago's conversation sufficiently evince, that the poet thought no mode of conception or expression too brutal for the character. STEEVENS.

There is no ground whatsoever for supposing that Shakspeare designed Bianca for a courtesan of Cyprus. Cassio, who was a Florentine, and Othello's lieutenant, sailed from Venice in a ship

That never set a squadron in the field,

belonging to Verona, at the same time with the Moor; and what difficulty is there in supposing that Bianca, who, Cassio himself informs us, "haunted him every where," took her passage in the same vessel with him; or followed him afterwards? Othello, we may suppose, with some of the Venetian troops, sailed in another vessel; and Desdemona and Iago embarked in a third.

Iago, after he has been at Cyprus but one day, speaks of Bianca, (Act IV. sc. i.) as one whom he had long known: he must therefore (if the poet be there correct) have known her at Venice:

"Now will I question Cassio of Bianca,
 "A buswife, that, by selling her desires,
 "Buys herself bread and clothes: it is a creature,
 "That dotes on Cassio;—as 'tis the strumpet's plague,
 "To beguile many, and be beguil'd by one."

MALONE.

Ingenious as Mr. Tyrwhitt's conjecture may appear, it but ill accords with the context. Iago is enumerating the disqualifications of Cassio for his new appointment; but surely his *being well spoken of by all men* could not be one of them. It is evident from what follows that a report had prevailed at Venice of Cassio's being soon to be married "to the most fair Bianca." Now as she was in Shakespeare's language "a customer," it was with a view to such a connexion that Iago called the new lieutenant *a fellow almost dam'd*. It may be gathered from various circumstances that an intercourse between Cassio and Bianca had existed before they left Venice; for Bianca is not only well known to Iago at Cyprus, but she upbraids Cassio (Act III. sc. iv.) with having been absent a week from her, when he had not been *two days* on the island. Hence, and from what Cassio himself relates, (Act IV. sc. i.) *I was the other day talking on the sea-bank with certain Venetians, and thither comes the bauble; by this hand, she falls thus about my neck*;—it may be presumed she had secretly followed him to Cyprus: a conclusion not only necessary to explain the passage in question, but to preserve the consistency of the fable at large.—The *sea-bank* on which Cassio was conversing with certain Venetians, was at Venice; for he had never till the day before been at Cyprus: he specifies those with whom he conversed as *Venetians*, because he was himself a *Florentine*; and he mentions the behaviour of Bianca in their presence, as tending to corroborate the report she had spread that he was soon to marry her. HENLEY.

I think, as I have already mentioned, that Bianca was a Venetian courtesan: but the *sea-bank* of which Cassio speaks, may have been the shore of Cyprus. In several other instances beside this,

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 381

Nor the division of a battle knows

our poet appears not to have recollected that the persons of his play had only been one day at Cyprus. I am aware, however, that this circumstance may be urged with equal force against the concluding part of my own preceding note; and the term *sea-bank* certainly adds support to what Mr. Henley has suggested, being the very term used by Lewkenor, in his account of the *Lido maggior* of Venice. See p. 396, n. 4. MALONE.

Thus far our commentaries on this obscure passage are arranged as they stand in the very succinct edition of Mr. Malone. Yet I cannot prevail on myself, in further imitation of him, to suppress the note of my late friend Mr. Tyrwhitt, a note that seems to be treated with civilities that degrade its value, and with a neglect that few of its author's opinions have deserved. My inability to offer such a defence of his present one, as he himself could undoubtedly have supplied, is no reason why it should be prevented from exerting its own proper influence on the reader. STEEVENS.

The poet has used the same mode of expression in *The Merchant of Venice*, Act I. sc. i:

“ O my Antonio, I do know of those
 “ Who therefore only are reputed wise,
 “ For saying nothing; who, I'm very sure,
 “ If they should speak, would *almost damn* those ears,
 “ Which, hearing them, would call their brothers fools,”

And there the allusion is evident to the gospel-judgement against those, who call their brothers fools. I am therefore inclined to believe, that the true reading here is:

A fellow almost damn'd in a fair life;

and that Shakspeare alludes to the judgement denounced in the gospel against those of *whom all men speak well*.

The character of Cassio is certainly such, as would be very likely to draw upon him all the peril of this denunciation, literally understood. Well-bred, easy, sociable, good-natured; with abilities enough to make him agreeable and useful, but not sufficient to excite the envy of his equals, or to alarm the jealousy of his superiors. It may be observed too, that Shakspeare has thought it proper to make Iago, in several other passages, bear his testimony to the amiable qualities of his rival. In Act V. sc. i. he speaks thus of him:

“ ——— if Cassio do remain,
 “ He hath *a daily beauty in his life*,
 “ That makes me ugly.”

I will only add, that, however hard or farfetch'd this allusion (whether Shakspeare's or only mine) may seem to be, arch-

More than a spinster ; unless the bookish theorick,^a
Wherein the toged consuls^b can propofe

bishop Sheldon had exactly the fame conceit, when he made that fingular compliment, as the writer calls it, [*Biograph. Britan. Art. Temple*,] to a nephew of fir William Temple, that “he had the curfe of the gospel, becaufe all men spoke well of him.”

TYRWHITT.

That Mr. Tyrwhitt has given us Shakspeare’s genuine word and meaning I have not the leaft doubt. Bianca is evidently a courtezan of Cyprus, and Caffio, of courfe, not yet acquainted with her. But even admitting that ſhe might have followed him thither, and got comfortably fettled in a “houfe,” ſtill, I think, the improbability of his having any intention to marry her is too grofs for confideration. What! the gallant Caffio, the friend and favourite of his general, to marry a “customer,” a “fitchew,” a “hufwife who by ſelling her defires buys herſelf bread and clothes!” Iago, indeed, pretends that ſhe had given out ſuch a report, but it is merely with a view to make Caffio laugh the louder. There can be no reaſon for his praftiſing any ſimilar impoſition upon Roderigo.

RITSON.

^a — theorick,] *Theorick*, for *theory*. So, in *The Proceedings againſt Garnet on the Powder-Plot*: “— as much deceived in the *theoricke* of truſt, as the lay diſciples were in the prafticke of conſpiracie.” STEEVENS.

This was the common language of Shakspeare’s time. See Vol. VI. p. 324, n. 8. MALONE.

^b *Wherein the toged consuls* —] *Consuls*, for *counſellors*.

WARBURTON.

Sir T. Hanmer reads, *council*. Mr. Theobald would have us read, *counſellors*. Venice was originally governed by *consuls*: and *consuls* ſeems to have been commonly uſed for *counſellors*, as afterwards in this play. In *Albion’s Triumph*, a maſque, 1631, the Emperor Albanaſt is ſaid to be “attended by fourteen *consuls*.” Again, “— the habits of the *consuls* were after the ſame manner.” Geoffery of Monmouth, and Matthew Paris after him, call both dukes and earls, *consuls*. STEEVENS.

The *rulers of the ſtate*, or civil governours. The word is uſed by Marlowe, in the ſame ſenſe, in *Tar-burlaine*, a tragedy, 1590:

“Both we will raigne as *consuls* of the earth.”

MALONE.

By *toged* perhaps is meant *practicable*, in oppoſition to the *warlike* qualifications of which he had been ſpeaking. He might have formed the word in alluſion to the Latin adage,—*Cedant arma togæ*.

STEEVENS.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 383

As masterly as he: mere prattle, without practice,⁴
Is all his foldiership. But, he, sir, had the elec-
tion:

And I,—of whom his eyes had seen the proof,
At Rhodes, at Cyprus; and on other grounds
Christian and heathen,—must be be-lee'd and
calm'd⁵

⁴ *More than a spinster; unless the bookish theorick,
Wherein the toged consuls can propose*

As masterly as he: mere prattle, without practice,] This play has many redundant lines, like the first and third of the foregoing. I cannot help regarding the words distinguished by the Roman character, as interpolations. In the opening scene of *King Henry V.* Shakspeare thought it unnecessary to join an epithet to *theorick*; and if the monosyllables—*as be*, were omitted, would Iago's meaning halt for want of them? STEEVENS.

⁵ ——— must be be-lee'd and calm'd —] The old quarto—*led*. The first folio reads, *be-lee'd*: but that spoils the measure. I read, *let*, hindered. WARBURTON.

Be-lee'd suits to *calm'd*, and the measure is not less perfect than in many other places. JOHNSON.

Be-lee'd and *be-calm'd* are terms of navigation.

I have been informed that one vessel is said to be in the *lee* of another, when it is so placed that the wind is intercepted from it. Iago's meaning therefore is, that Cassio had got the wind of him, and *be-calm'd* him from going on.

To *be-calm* (as I learn from Falconer's *Marine Dictionary*) is likewise to obstruct the current of the wind in its passage to a ship, by any contiguous object. STEEVENS.

The quarto, 1622, reads:

———— must be *led* and calm'd —.

I suspect therefore that Shakspeare wrote—must be *lee'd* and calm'd. The *lee*-side of a ship is that on which the wind blows. To *lee*, or to be *lee'd*, may mean, to fall to leeward, or to lose the advantage of the wind.

The reading of the text is that of the folio. I doubt whether there be any such sea-phrase as *be-lee*; and suspect the word *be* was inadvertently repeated by the compositor of the folio.

Mr. Steevens has explained the word *becalm'd*, but where is it found in the text? MALONE.

Mr. Malone is unfortunate in his present explanation. The *lee*-

By debtor⁶ and creditor, this counter-caster;⁷
 He, in good time, must his lieutenant be,
 And I, (God blefs the mark!⁸) his Moor-ship's
 ancient.

side of a ship is directly *contrary* to that on which the wind blows; if I may believe a skilful navigator whom I have consulted on this occasion.

Mr. Malone asks where the word *becalm'd* is to be found in the text. To this question I must reply by another. Is it not evident, that the prefix—*be* is to be continued from the former naval phrase to the latter? Shakspeare would have written *be-calm'd* as well as *be-lee'd*, but that the close of his verse would not admit of a disyllable.—Should we say that a ship was *lee'd*, or *calm'd*, we should employ a phrase unacknowledged by sailors.

STEEVENS.

⁶ By debtor —] All the modern editors read—By *debtor*; but *debitor* (the reading of the old copies) was the word used in Shakspeare's time. So, in Sir John Davies's *Epigrams*, 1598:

“ There stands the constable, there stands the whore,—

“ There by the serjeant stands the *debitor*.”

See also the passage quoted from *Cymbeline* in n. 7. MALONE.

⁷ — *this* counter-caster;] It was anciently the practice to reckon up sums with *counters*. To this Shakspeare alludes again in *Cymbeline*, Act V: “ — it sums up thousands in a trice: you have no true debtor and creditor, but it; of what's past, is, and to come, the discharge. Your neck, sir, is pen, book, and *counters* ;” &c. Again, in *Acolastus*, a comedy, 1540: “ I wyl cast my *counters*, or with *counters* make all my reckenynges.”

STEEVENS.

So, in *The Winter's Tale*:—“ — fifteen hundred shorn,—
 What comes the wool to?—I cannot do't without *counters*.”

MALONE.

⁸ — *blefs the mark!*] Kelly, in his comments on Scots proverbs, observes, that the Scots, when they compare person to person, use this exclamation.

I find, however, this phrase in Churchyard's *Tragicall Discourse of a dolorous Gentlewoman*, &c. 1593:

“ Not beauty here I claime by this my talke,

“ For browne and blacke I was, *God blisse the marke!*

“ Who calls me fair dooth scarce know cheese from chaffe:

“ For I was form'd when winter nights was darke,

“ And nature's workes tooke light at little sparke;

“ For kinde in scorne had made a moulde of jette,

“ That shene like cole, wherein my face was set.”

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 385

ROD. By heaven, I rather would have been his hangman.

IAGO. But there's no remedy, 'tis the curse of service;

Preferment goes by letter,² and affection,
Not by the old gradation,³ where each second
Stood heir to the first. Now, sir, be judge your-
self,

Whether I in any just term am affin'd⁴
To love the Moor.

ROD. I would not follow him then.

IAGO. O, sir, content you;
I follow him to serve my turn upon him:
We cannot all be masters, nor all masters
Cannot be truly follow'd. You shall mark
Many a duteous and knee-crooking knave,
That, doting on his own obsequious bondage,
Wears out his time, much like his master's ass,

It is singular that both Churchyard and Shakspeare should have used this form of words with reference to a black person.

STEEVENS.

² — his Moorship's—] The first quarto reads—his *worship's*.

STEEVENS.

³ — by letter,] By recommendation from powerful friends.

JOHNSON.

⁴ Not by the old gradation,] Old gradation, is gradation established by ancient practice. JOHNSON.

⁴ Whether I in any just term am affin'd—] *Affin'd* is the reading of the third quarto and the first folio. The second quarto and all the modern editions have *assign'd*. The meaning is,—Do I stand with-in any such terms of propinquity, or relation to the Moor, as that it is my duty to love him? JOHNSON.

The original quarto, 1622, has *assign'd*, but it was manifestly an error of the press. MALONE.

For nought but provender; and, when he's old,
cashier'd;⁵

Whip me such honest knaves:⁶ Others there are,
Who, trimm'd in forms and visages of duty,
Keep yet their hearts attending on themselves;
And, throwing but shows of service on their lords,
Do well thrive by them, and, when they have lin'd
their coats,

Do themselves homage: these fellows have some
soul;

And such a one do I profess myself.

For, fir,⁷

It is as sure as you are Roderigo,⁷

Were I the Moor, I would not be Iago:

In following him, I follow but myself;

Heaven is my judge, not I for love and duty,

But seeming so, for my peculiar end:

For when my outward action doth demonstrate

The native act and figure of my heart

In compliment extern,⁸ 'tis not long after

But I will wear my heart upon my sleeve

For daws to peck at:⁹ I am not what I am.

⁵ *For nought but provender; and, when he's old, cashier'd;*] Surely this line was originally shorter. We might safely read,

For nought but provender; when old, cashier'd. STEEVENS.

⁶ — *honest knaves:*] *Knave* is here for *servant*, but with a fly mixture of contempt. JOHNSON.

⁷ *For, fir,*] These words, which are found in all the ancient copies, are omitted by Mr. Pope, and most of our modern editors.

STEEVENS.

⁸ *In compliment extern,*] In that which I do only for an outward show of civility. JOHNSON.

So, in Sir W. D'Avenant's *Albovine*, 1629:

" — that in sight *extern*

" A patriarch seems." STEEVENS.

⁹ *For daws &c.*] The first quarto reads,—*For doves*—.

STEEVENS.

I have adhered to the original copy, because I suspect Shak-

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 387

ROD. What a full fortune does the thick-lips owe,²

If he can carry't thus!

IAGO. Call up her father,
Rouse him: make after him, poison his delight,
Proclaim him in the streets; incense her kinsmen,
And, though he in a fertile climate dwell,
Plague him with flies: though that his joy be joy,
Yet throw such changes of vexation on't,
As it may lose some colour.

ROD. Here is her father's house; I'll call aloud.

speare had in his thoughts a passage in Lyly's *Euphues and his England*, 1580: "As all coynes are not good that have the image of Cæsar, nor all gold, that is coyned with the kings stampe, so all is not truth that beareth the shew of godlinesse, nor all friends that beare a faire face. If thou pretend such love to Euphues, carry *thy heart on the backe of thy band*, and thy tongue in thy palme, that I may see what is in thy minde, and thou with thy finger claspe thy mouth.—I can better take a blister of a nettle, than a pricke of a rose; more willing that a raven should peck out mine eyes, than a turtle peck at them." MALONE.

I read with the folio. Iago certainly means to say, he would expose his heart as a prey to the most worthless of birds, i. e. *doves*, which are treated with universal contempt. Our author would scarcely have degraded the amiable tribe of *doves* to such an office; nor is the mention of them at all suitable to the harsh turn of Iago's speech. STEEVENS.

² *What a full fortune does the thick-lips owe,*] *Full fortune* is, I believe, a complete piece of good fortune, as in another scene of this play a *full soldier* is put for a complete soldier. So, in *Cymbeline*:

"Our pleasure his *full fortune* doth confine."

To *owe* is in ancient language, to *own*, to possess. STEEVENS.

So, in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

"—not the imperious show

"Of the *full-fortun'd* Cæsar—."

Full is used by Chaucer in the same sense in his *Troilus*, B. I.:

"Sufficeth this, my *full* friend Pandare,

"That I have said—."

See also Vol. XII. p. 580, n. 5. MALONE.

IAGO. Do; with like timorous accent, and dire yell,
As when, by night and negligence, the fire
Is spied in populous cities.³

ROD. What ho! Brabantio! signior Brabantio,
ho!

IAGO. Awake! what, ho! Brabantio! thieves!
thieves! thieves!
Look to your house, your daughter, and your bags!
Thieves! thieves!

BRABANTIO, *above, at a window.*

BRA. What is the reason of this terrible summons?

What is the matter there?

ROD. Signior, is all your family within?

IAGO. Are your doors lock'd?⁴

BRA. Why? wherefore ask you this?

IAGO. 'Zounds, sir, you are robb'd; for shame,
put on your gown;

³ *As when, by night and negligence, the fire
Is spied in populous cities.*] The particle is used equivocally;
the same liberty is taken by writers more correct:

“ The wonderful creature! a woman of reason!

“ Never grave out of pride, never gay out of season.”

JOHNSON.

By night and negligence means, during the time of night and negligence. M. MASON.

The meaning, as Mr. Edwards has observed, is, “ not that the fire was spied by negligence, but the fire, which came by night and negligence, was spied.—And this double meaning to the same word is common to Shakspeare with all other writers, especially where the word is so familiar a one, as this in question. Ovid seems even to have thought it a beauty instead of a defect.” MALONE.

⁴ *Are your doors lock'd?*] The first quarto reads,
Are all doors lock'd? STEEVENS.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 389

Your heart is burst,⁵ you have lost half your soul;
Even now, very now, an old black ram
Is tuppung your white ewe.⁶ Arise, arise;
Awake the snorting citizens with the bell,
Or else the devil will make a grandfire of you:
Arise, I say.

BRA. What, have you lost your wits?

ROD. Most reverend signior, do you know my voice?

BRA. Not I; What are you?

ROD. My name is—Roderigo.

BRA. The worse welcome:
I have charg'd thee, not to haunt about my doors:
In honest plainness thou hast heard me say,
My daughter is not for thee; and now, in mad-
ness,
Being full of supper, and distempering draughts,⁷
Upon malicious bravery, dost thou come
To start my quiet.

⁵ —is burst,] i. e. is broken. *Burst* for *broke* is used in our author's *King Henry IV.* Part II: "—and then he *burst* his head for crowding among the marshal's men." See Vol. IX. p. 147, n. 6. STEEVENS.

See also Vol. VI. p. 386, n. 6; and p. 494, n. 4. MALONE.

⁶ —tuppung *your white ewe*.] In the north of England a ram is called a *tup*. MALONE.

I had made the same observation in the third act of this play, scene iii.

—*your white ewe*.] It appears from a passage in Decker's *Oper se O*, 4to. 1612, that this was a term in the cant language used by vagabonds: "As the men haue nicke-names, so likewise haue the women: for some of them are called *the white ewe*, the *lambe*," &c. STEEVENS.

⁷ —distempering *draughts*,] To be distempered with liquor, was, in Shakspeare's age, the phrase for intoxication. In *Hamlet*, the King is said to be "marvellous *distempered* with wine."

MALONE.

See Vol. IX. p. 321, n. 3. STEEVENS.

ROD. Sir, fir, fir, fir,—

BRA. But thou must needs be sure,
My spirit, and my place, have in them power
To make this bitter to thee.

ROD. Patience, good fir.

BRA. What tell'st thou me of robbing? this is
Venice;

My house is not a grange.⁸

ROD. Most grave Brabantio,
In simple and pure foul I come to you.

IAGO. 'Zounds, fir, you are one of those, that
will not serve God, if the devil bid you. Because
we come to do you service, you think we are ruf-
fians: You'll have your daughter cover'd with a
Barbary horse; you'll have your nephews neigh to
you:⁹ you'll have coursers for cousins, and gennets
for germans.¹

⁸ — *grange.*] *This is Venice;*

My house is not a grange.

That is, "you are in a populous city, not in a *lone house*, where a robbery might easily be committed." *Grange* is strictly and properly the farm of a monastery, where the religious repositied their corn. *Grangia*, Lat. from *Granum*. But in Lincolnshire, and in other northern counties, they call every lone house, or farm which stands solitary, a *grange*. T. WARTON.

So, in T. Heywood's *Engliſh Traveller*, 1633:

" ——— to absent himself from home,

" And make his father's house but as a *grange*?" &c.

Again, in Daniel's *Complaint of Rosamond*, 1599:

" ——— soon was I train'd from court

" To a *solitary grange*," &c.

Again, in *Measure for Measure*: " ——— at the moated *grange* resides this dejected Mariana." STEEVENS.

⁹ — *your nephews neigh to you:*] *Nepheru*, in this instance, has the power of the Latin word *nepos*, and signifies a grandson, or any lineal descendant, however remote. So, in Spenser:

" And all the sons of these five brethren reign'd

" By due success, and all their *nepherus* late,

" Even thrice eleven descents the crown obtain'd."

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 391

BRA. What profane wretch art thou?³

IAGO. I am one, fir, that comes to tell you, your daughter and the Moor are now making the beast with two backs.⁴

Again, in Chapman's version of the *Odyssey*, Book XXIV. Laertes says of Telemachus his *grandson*:

" ——— to behold my son

" And *nephew* close in such contention."

Sir W. Dugdale very often employs the word in this sense; and without it, it would not be very easy to show how *Brabantio* could have *nephews* by the marriage of his *daughter*. Ben Jonson likewise uses it with the same meaning. The alliteration in this passage caused Shakspeare to have recourse to it.

STEEVENS.

See Vol. X. p. 606, n. 9. MALONE.

² ——— *gennets for germans.*] A *jennet* is a Spanish horse. So, in Heywood's *Rape of Lucrece*, 1630:

" ——— there stays within my tent

" A winged *jennet*." STEEVENS.

³ *What profane wretch art thou?*] That is, *what wretch of gross and licentious language?* In that sense Shakspeare often uses the word *profane*. JOHNSON.

It is so used by other writers of the same age:

" How far off dwells the house-surgeon?

" ——— You are a *profane* fellow, i' faith."

Again, in Ben Jonson's *Tale of a Tub*:

" By the fly justice, and his clerk *profane*."

James Howell, in a dialogue prefixed to his edition of Cotgrave's Dictionary, in 1673, has the following sentence: "*J'aimerois mieux estre trop ceremonieux, que trop profane*:" which he thus also anglicises—"I had rather be too ceremonious, than too *profane*." STEEVENS.

⁴ ——— *your daughter and the Moor are now making the beast with two backs.*] This is an ancient proverbial expression in the French language, whence Shakspeare probably borrowed it; for in the *Dictionnaire des Proverbes Françaises*, par G. D. B. Bruxelles, 1710, 12mo. I find the following article: "*Faire la bête a deux dos*," pour dire, faire l'amour. PERCY.

In the *Dictionnaire Comique*, par le Roux, 1750, this phrase is more particularly explained under the article *Bête*. "*Faire la bête a deux dos*.—Maniere de parler qui signifie estre couché avec une femme; faire le deduit."—"Et faisoient tous deux souvent en-

BRA. Thou art a villain.

IAGO.

You are—a senator.

BRA. This thou shalt answer; I know thee, Roderigo.

ROD. Sir, I will answer any thing. But I beseech you,

[If't be your pleasure,⁵ and most wise consent,
(As partly, I find, it is,) that your fair daughter,
At this odd-even and dull watch o'the night,⁶

semble la bete a deux dos joyeusement." *Rabelais*, liv. i. There was a translation of *Rabelais* published in the time of Shakspeare.

MALONE.

⁵ *If't be your pleasure, &c.*] The lines printed in crotchets are not in the first edition, but in the folio of 1623. JOHNSON.

⁶ *At this odd-even and dull watch o'the night,*] The *even of night* is *midnight*, the time when night is divided into *even* parts.

JOHNSON.

Odd is here ambiguously used, as it signifies *strange*, *uncouth*, or *unwonted*; and as it is opposed to *even*.

But this expression, however explained, is very harsh.

STEEVENS.

This ODD EVEN is simply the interval between twelve at night and one in the morning. HENLEY.

By this singular expression,—“ this *odd-even* of night,” our poet appears to have meant, that it was just approaching to, or just past, midnight; so near, or so recently past, that it was doubtful whether at that moment it stood at the point of midnight, or at some other less equal division of the twenty-four hours; which a few minutes either before or after midnight would be.

So, in *Macbeth*:

“ ——— What is the *night* ?

“ *Lady M.* Almost at *odds with morning*, which is *which*.”

Shakspeare was probably thinking of his boyish school-play, *odd or even*. MALONE.

Surely, “ almost at *odds with morning*” signifies, almost *entering into conflict* with it. Thus, in *Timon of Athens*:

“ 'Tis honour, with most lands to be at *odds*,—.”

In *King Henry VI*, Part III. we find an idea similar to that in *Macbeth*:

“ ——— like the *morning's war*,

“ When dying clouds *contend* with growing light.”

STEEVENS,

Transported—with no worse nor better guard,
 But with a knave of common hire, a gondolier,—
 To the gross clasps of a lascivious Moor,—
 If this be known to you, and your allowance,⁷
 We then have done you bold and saucy wrongs;
 But, if you know not this, my manners tell me,
 We have your wrong rebuke. Do not believe,
 That, from the sense of all civility,⁸
 I thus would play and trifle with your reverence:
 Your daughter,—if you have not given her leave,—
 I say again, hath made a gross revolt;
 Tying her duty, beauty, wit, and fortunes,
 In an extravagant⁹ and wheeling stranger,²
 Of here and every where: Straight satisfy yourself:]
 If she be in her chamber, or your house,

⁷ ———and your allowance,] i. e. done with your approbation.
 See Vol. XI. p. 302, n. 3; and Vol. XIV. p. 129, n. 3.

MALONE.

⁸ That, from the sense of all civility,] That is, in opposition to, or departing from the sense of all civility. So, in *Twelfth Night*:

“ But this is from my commission—.”

Again, in *The Mayor of Quinborough*, by Middleton, 1661:

“ But this is from my business.” MALONE.

⁹ In an extravagant—] *Extravagant* is here used in its Latin signification, for wandering. Thus, in *Hamlet*: “ The extravagant, and erring spirit,—” STEEVENS.

² Tying her duty, beauty, wit, and fortunes,

In an extravagant and wheeling stranger,] Thus the old copies, for which the modern editors, following Mr. Pope, have substituted—*To an extravagant &c.* In *King Lear*, we find—“ And hold our lives in mercy;” (not *at* mercy;) in *The Winter’s Tale*—“ he was torn to pieces with a bear,” not “ *by* a bear;” and in *Hamlet*,

“ To let this canker of our nature come

“ In further evil.”

So, in the next scene, we have “ ———in your part,” not “ ———on your part.” We might substitute modern for ancient phraseology in all these passages with as much propriety as in the present. We yet say, “ she is *wrapp’d up* in him.” MALONE.

Let loose on me the justice of the state
For thus deluding you.³

BRA. Strike on the tinder, ho!
Give me a taper;—call up all my people:—
This accident is not unlike my dream,
Belief of it oppresses me already:—
Light, I say! light! [*Exit, from above.*]

IAGO. Farewell; for I must leave you:
It seems not meet, nor wholesome to my place,
To be produc'd⁴ (as, if I stay, I shall,)
Against the Moor: For, I do know, the state,—
However this may gall him with some check,⁵—
Cannot with safety cast him;⁶ for he's embark'd
With such loud reason to the Cyprus' wars,
(Which even now stand in act,) that, for their souls,
Another of his fathom they have not,
To lead their business: in which regard,
Though I do hate him as I do hell pains,
Yet, for necessity of present life,
I must show out a flag and sign of love,
Which is indeed but sign. That you shall surely
find him,
Lead to the Sagittary⁷ the rais'd search;
And there will I be with him. So, farewell.

[*Exit.*]

³ For thus deluding you.] The first quarto reads,—For *this delusion*. STEEVENS.

⁴ To be produc'd —] The folio reads,—*produced*.

STEEVENS.

⁵ — *some check*,] Some rebuke. JOHNSON.

⁶ — cast him;] That is, *dismiss* him; *reject* him. We still say, a *cast* coat, and a *cast* serving-man. JOHNSON.

⁷ — *the Sagittary* —] Thus the folio. The quarto, 1622, reads,—*the Sagittar* —. I have chosen the unclipped reading.

STEEVENS.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 395

Enter, below, BRABANTIO, and Servants with torches.

BRA. It is too true an evil: gone she is;
And what's to come of my despised time,⁸
Is nought but bitterness.—Now, Roderigo,
Where didst thou see her?—O unhappy girl!—
With the Moor, say'st thou?—Who would be a fa-
ther?—
How didst thou know 'twas she?—O, thou de-
ceiv'st me
Past thought!⁹—What said she to you?—Get more
tapers;
Raise all my kindred.—Are they married think
you?

ROD. Truly, I think, they are.

BRA. O heaven!—How got she out!—O treason
of the blood!—

Fathers, from hence trust not your daughters' minds

⁸ *And what's to come of my despised time,]* *Despised time, is time of no value; time in which*

“There's nothing serious in mortality,

“The wine of life is drawn, and the mere dregs

“Are left this vault to brag of.” *Macbeth.* JOHNSON.

Again, in *Romeo and Juliet*:

“_____ expire the term

“Of a *despised* life clos'd in my breast.”

As the quotation in the preceding note belongs to our steady moralist, Dr. Johnson, it could not have been more uncharacteristically vitiated, than by the compositor, in Mr. Malone's edition, where it appears thus:

“There's nothing serious in *morality*.” STEEVENS.

⁹ — *O, thou deceiv'st me*

Past thought!] Thus the quarto, 1622. The folio, 1623, and the quartos, 1630 and 1655, read,

— *O, she deceives me*

Past thought! —.

I have chosen the apostrophe to his absent daughter, as the most spirited of the two readings. STEEVENS.

By what you see them act.—Are there not charms,²
By which the property of youth and maidhood
May be abus'd?³ Have you not read, Roderigo,
Of some such thing?

ROD. Yes, sir; I have, indeed.

BRA. Call up my brother.—O, that you had had
her!—

Some one way, some another.—Do you know
Where we may apprehend her and the Moor?

ROD. I think, I can discover him; if you please
To get good guard, and go along with me.

BRA. Pray you, lead on.⁴ At every house I'll call;
I may command at most:—Get weapons, ho!
And raise some special officers of night.⁵—
On, good Roderigo;—I'll deserve your pains.

[*Exeunt.*]

² — Are *there not charms*,] Thus the second folio. The first, and the quarto, ungrammatically read,—*Is there not* &c. Mr. Malone follows the oldest copies, and observes that the words—*Is there not charms*, &c. mean—*Is there not such a thing as charms*?

STEEVENS.

³ *By which the property of youth and maidhood*

May be abus'd?] By which the faculties of a young virgin may be infatuated, and made subject to illusions and false imagination:

“ — wicked dreams *abuse*

“ The curtain'd sleep.” *Macbeth.* JOHNSON.

— *and maidhood* —] The quartos read—*and manhood*—.

STEEVENS.

⁴ *Pray you, lead on.*] The first quarto reads,—*Pray lead me on.*

STEEVENS.

⁵ — *of night.*] Thus the original quarto, 1622; for which the editor of the folio substituted—*officers of night*; a reading which all the modern editors have adopted. I have more than once had occasion to remark that the quarto readings were sometimes changed by the editor of the folio, from ignorance of our poet's phraseology or meaning.

I have no doubt that Shakspeare, before he wrote this play, read *The Commonwealth and Government of Venice*, translated from the Italian, by Lewes Lewkenor, and printed in quarto. 1599: a book

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 397

SCENE II.

The same. Another Street.

Enter OTHELLO, IAGO, and Attendants.

IAGO. Though in the trade of war I have slain men,
Yet do I hold it very stuff o'the conscience,⁶

prefixed to which we find a copy of verses by Spenser. This treatise furnished our poet with the knowledge of those *officers of night*, whom Brabantio here desires to be called to his assistance.

“ For the greater expedition thereof, of these kinds of judgments, the heades or chieftaines of *the officers by night* do obtaine the authority of which the advocators are deprived. These *officers of the night* are six, and six likewise are those meane officers, that have only power to correct base vagabonds and trifling offences.

“ Those that do execute this office are called heades of the tribes of the city, because out of every tribe, (for the city is divided into six tribes,) there is elected an *officer of the night*, and a head of the tribe.—The duty of eyther of these officers is, to keepe a watch every other night by turn, within their tribes; and, now the one, and then the other, to make rounds about his quarter, till the dawning of the day, being always guarded and attended on with weaponed officers and serjeants, and to see that there be not any disorder done in the darkness of the night, which alwaies emboldeneth men to naughtinesse; and that there be not any houses broken up, nor theeves nor rogues lurking in corners with intent to do violence.” *Commonwealthe of Venice*, pp. 97, 99. MALONE.

It has been observed by Mr. Malone, in *Romeo and Juliet*, (See Vol. XIV. p. 557, and 558, n. 2,) that there is no *watch* in Italy. How does that assertion quadrate with the foregoing account of *officers of the night*?” STEEVENS.

⁶ — *stuff o'the conscience*,] This expression to common readers appears harsh. *Stuff* of the conscience is, *substance* or *essence* of the conscience. *Stuff* is a word of great force in the Teutonic languages. The elements are called in Dutch, *Hoefel stoffen*, or *head stuffs*. JOHNSON.

Again, in *King Henry VIII* :

“ You're full of heavenly *stuff*,” &c.

Frisch's *German Dictionary* gives this explanation of the word *stuff* :
“ — *materies ex qua aliquid fieri poterit.*” STEEVENS.

To do no contriv'd murder; I lack iniquity
 Sometimes, to do me service: Nine or ten times
 I had thought to have yerk'd him here under the
 ribs.

OTH. 'Tis better as it is.

IAGO. Nay, but he prated,⁷
 And spoke such scurvy and provoking terms
 Against your honour,
 That, with the little godliness I have,
 I did full hard forbear him. But, I pray, sir,
 Are you fast married? for, be sure of this,—
 That the magnifico⁸ is much belov'd;
 And hath, in his effect, a voice potential
 As double as the duke's:⁹ he will divorce you;

Shakspeare in *Macbeth* uses this word in the same sense, and in a manner yet more harsh:

“Cleanse the *stuff'd bosom* of that perilous *stuff*.” *Macbeth*.
 HOLT WHITE.

⁷ — *he prated,*] Of whom is this said? Of Roderigo?

STEVENS.

⁸ — *the magnifico*—] “The chief men of Venice are by a peculiar name called *Magnifici*, i. e. *magnificoes*.” *Minshieu's Dictionary*. See too *Volpone*. TOLLER.

⁹ — *a voice potential*

As double as the duke's:] It appears from Thomas's *History of Italy*, 4to. 1560, to have been a popular opinion, though a false one, that the duke of Venice had a *double voice*. “Whereas,” says he, “many have reported, the duke in balloting should have *two voices*; it is nothing so; for in giving his voice he hath but one ballot, as all others have.” Shakspeare, therefore, might have gone on this received opinion, which he might have found in some other book. Supposing, however, that he had learned from this very passage that the duke had *not* a double voice in the Council of Seven, yet as he has a vote in each of the various councils of the Venetian state, (a privilege which no other person enjoys,) our poet might have thought himself justified in the epithet which he has here used; and this circumstance, which he might have found in a book already quoted, Contareno's *Commonwealth and Government of Venice*, 4to. 1599, was, I believe, here in his thoughts.

I shall promulgate,²) I fetch my life and being
From men of royal sieges;³ and my demerits⁴
May speak, unbonneted,⁵ to as proud a fortune

² ————— 'Tis yet to know,
(Which, when I know that boasting is an honour,
I shall promulgate,) Thus the folio. The quarto, 1622,
reads:

" ————— 'Tis yet to know
" That boasting is an honour.
" I shall promulgate, I fetch," &c.

Some words certainly were omitted at the press; and perhaps they have been supplied in the wrong place. Shakspeare might have written:

" ————— 'Tis yet to know
" That boasting is an honour; which when I know,
" I shall promulgate, I fetch my life," &c.

I am yet to learn that boasting is honourable, which when I have learned, I shall proclaim to the world *that* I fetch my life &c.

MALONE.

I am perfectly satisfied with the reading in the text, which appears not to have been suspected of disarrangement by any of our predecessors. STEEVENS.

³ ————— *men of royal sieges*;) Men who have sat upon royal thrones.

The quarto has—*men of royal height*. *Siege* is used for *seat* by other authors. So, in Stowe's Chronicle, p. 575: "there was set up a throne or *siege royall* for the king."

Again, in Spenser's *Faery Queen*, B. II. c. vii:

"A stately *siege* of soveraigne majesty." STEEVENS.

So, in Grafton's Chronicle, p. 443: "Incontinent after that he was placed in the *royal siege*," &c. MALONE.

⁴ ————— *and my demerits*—] *Demerits* has the same meaning in our author, and many others of that age, as *merits*:

"Opinion that so sticks on Martius, may
"Of his *demerits* rob Cominius." *Coriolanus*.

Again, in Dugdale's *Warwickshire*, p. 850, edit. 1730: "Henry Conway, esq. for his singular *demerits* received the dignity of knighthood."

Mercio and *demercio* had the same meaning in the Roman language.

STEEVENS.

⁵ *May speak*, unbonneted,] Thus all the copies read. It should be—*unbonneting*, i. e. without putting off the bonnet.

POPE.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 401

As this that I have reach'd : For know, Iago,
But that I love the gentle Desdemona,

I do not see the propriety of Mr. Pope's emendation, though adopted by Dr. Warburton. *Unbonnetting* may as well be, *not putting on*, as *not putting off*, the bonnet. Hammer reads *c'en* bonneted. JOHNSON.

To speak *unbonnetted*, is to speak *with the cap off*, which is directly opposite to the poet's meaning. Othello means to say, that his birth and services set him upon such a rank, that he may speak to a senator of Venice with his hat *on*; i. e. without showing any marks of deference or inequality. I therefore am inclined to think Shakspeare wrote :

May speak, and, bonnetted, &c. THEOBALD.

Bonnetter (says Cotgrave) is to *put off one's cap*. So, in *Coriolanus* : " Those who are supple and courteous to the people, *bonnetted* without any further deed to heave them at all into their estimation." *Unbonnetted* may therefore signify, *without taking the cap off*. We might, I think, venture to read *imbonnetted*. It is common with Shakspeare to make or use words compounded in the same manner. Such are *imparun*, *impaint*, *impale*, and *immask*. Of all the readings hitherto proposed, that of Mr. Theobald is, I think, the best.

STEEVENS.

The objection to Mr. Steevens's explanation of *unbonnetted*, i. e. *without taking the cap off*, is, that Shakspeare has himself used the word in *King Lear*, Act III. sc. i. with the very contrary signification, namely, for *one whose cap is off* :

" ——— *Unbonnetted* he runs,

" And bids what will take all."

He might, however, have employed the word here in a different sense. MALONE.

Unbonnetted, is uncovered, revealed, made known. In the second act and third scene of this play we meet with an expression similar to this : " — you *unlace* your reputation ;" and another in *As you like it*, Act IV. sc. i : " Now *unmuzzle* your wisdom."

A. C.

Mr. Fuseli (and who is better acquainted with the sense and spirit of our author?) explains this contested passage as follows :

" I am *his equal or superior in rank* ; and were it not so, such are my *demerits*, that, *unbonnetted*, without the addition of patrician or senatorial dignity, they may speak to as proud a fortune &c.

" At Venice, the *bonnet*, as well as the *toge*, is a badge of aristocratic honours to this day." STEEVENS.

I would not my unhouſed⁶ free condition
Put into circumscription and confine
For the ſea's worth.⁷ But, look! what lights come
yonder?

*Enter CASSIO, at a diſtance, and certain Officers with
torches.*

IAGO. Theſe are the raiſed father, and his friends:
You were beſt go in.

OTH. Not I: I muſt be found;
My parts, my title, and my perfect ſoul,
Shall manifeſt me rightly. Is it they?

IAGO. By Janus, I think no.

OTH. The ſervants of the duke, and my lieutenant.

⁶ — *unhouſed* —] Free from domeſtick cares. A thought natural to an adventurer. JOHNSON.

Othello talking as a ſoldier, *unhouſed* may ſignify the having no ſettled houſe or habitation. WHALLEY.

⁷ *For the ſea's worth.*] I would not marry her, though ſhe were as rich as the Adriatick, which the Doge annually marries.

JOHNSON.

As the gold ring, annually thrown by the Doge into the Adriatick, cannot be ſaid to have much enriched it, I believe the common and obvious meaning of this paſſage is the true one.

The ſame words occur in Sir W. D'Avenant's *Cruel Brother*, 1630:

“ — he would not loſe that privilege,

“ *For the ſea's worth.*”

Perhaps the phraſe is proverbial.

Pliny the naturaliſt has a chapter on *the riches of the ſea*.

Again, in *The Winter's Tale*:

“ — for all the ſun fees, or

“ The cloſe earth wombs, or *the profound ſea hides*

“ *In unknown fathoms,*” &c.

Again, in *King Henry V.* Act I:

“ — As rich with praiſe,

“ As is the ooze, and *bottom of the ſea*,

“ With ſunken wreck, and ſumleſs treaſuries.”

STEEVENS.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 403

The goodness of the night upon you, friends!⁸
What is the news?

CAS. The duke does greet you, general;
And he requires your haste-post-haste appearance,⁹
Even on the instant.

OTH. What is the matter, think you?

CAS. Something from Cyprus, as I may divine;
It is a business of some heat: the gallies
Have sent a dozen sequent messengers²
This very night, at one another's heels;
And many of the consuls,³ rais'd, and met,
Are at the duke's already: You have been hotly
call'd for;
When, being not at your lodging to be found,
The senate hath sent about⁴ three several quests,
To search you out.

⁸ *The goodness of the night upon you, friends!*] So, in *Measure for Measure*:

"The best and wholesomest spirits of the night

"Envelop you, good Provost!" STEEVENS.

⁹ — *your haste-post-haste appearance*,] The comma, hitherto placed after *haste*, should be a hyphen. *Your haste-post-haste appearance* is your immediate appearance. The words "*Haste, post, haste*," were in our author's time usually written on the cover of packets, or letters, sent express. RITSON.

² — *sequent messengers*—] The first quarto reads—*frequent messengers*. STEEVENS.

³ — *the consuls*,] See p. 382, n. 3. STEEVENS.

⁴ *The senate hath sent about*—] The early quartos, and all the modern editors, have,

The senate sent above three several quests,—.

The folio:

The senate hath sent about &c.

That is, *about* the city. I have adopted the reading of the folio.

JOHNSON.

Quests are, on this occasion, searches. So, in Heywood's *Brazen Age*, 1613:

"Now, if in all his *quests*, he be withheld."

An ancient MS. entitled "The booke of huntynge that is cleped

OTH. 'Tis well I am found by you.
I will but spend a word here in the house,
And go with you. [Exit.

CAS. Ancient, what makes he here?

IAGO. 'Faith, he to-night hath boarded a land
carack;⁴

If it prove lawful prize, he's made for ever.

CAS. I do not understand.

IAGO. He's married.

CAS. To who?'

Mayster of game," has the following explanation of the word *quest*: "This word *quest* is a terme of herte hunters of beyonde the see; and is thus moche to say as whan the hunter goth to fynde of the hert and to herborow him." STEEVENS.

⁴ ——— a land carack;] A *carack* is a ship of great bulk, and commonly of great value; perhaps what we now call a *galleon*.
JOHNSON.

So, in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Coxcomb*:

" ——— they'll be freighted;

" They're made like *caracks*, all for strength and stowage."

STEEVENS.

The first ships that came richly laden from the West Indies to Europe were those from the Caraccas, part of the Spanish settlements: and some years ago a Caracca ship generally proved a very rich prize. M. MASON.

A *carack*, or *carick*, (for so it was more frequently written in Shakspeare's time,) is of higher origin, and was denominated from the Spanish word, *caraca*, which signifies a vessel of great bulk, constructed to carry a heavy burthen. The Spanish *caraca*, Minshew thinks, may have been formed from the Italian *carico*, a lading, or freight. MALONE.

⁵ *To who?*] It is somewhat singular that Cassio should ask this question. In the 3d scene of the 3d act, *Iago* says:

" Did Michael Cassio, when you woo'd my lady,

" Know of your love?

" Oth. *From first to last.*"

He who was acquainted with the object courted by his friend, could have little reason for doubting to whom he would be married.

STEEVENS.

Cassio's seeming ignorance of Othello's courtship or marriage

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 405

Re-enter OTHELLO.

IAGO. Marry, to—Come, captain, will you go?

OTH. Have with you.⁶

CAS. Here comes another troop to seek for you.

Enter BRABANTIO, RODERIGO, and Officers of night, with torches and weapons.

IAGO. It is Brabantio:—general, be advis'd; ⁷
He comes to bad intent.

OTH. Hola! stand there!

ROD. Signior, it is the Moor.

BRA. Down with him, thief!
[*They draw on both sides.*]

IAGO. You, Roderigo! come, fir, I am for you.

OTH. Keep up your bright swords, for the dew
will rust them.—

Good signior, you shall more command with years,
Than with your weapons.

might only be affected; in order to keep his friend's secret, till it became publicly known. BLACKSTONE.

Or he might fear that Othello had proved false to the gentle Desdemona, and married another. MALONE.

How far this suspicious apprehension would have become the benevolent Cassio, the intimate friend of Othello, let the reader judge. STEEVENS.

⁶ *Have with you.*] This expression denotes readiness. So, in the ancient *Interlude of Nature*, bl. l. no date:

“ And saw that Glotony wold nedys begone;

“ *Have with thee*, Glotony, quoth he anon,

“ For I must go wyth thee.”

See Vol. X. p. 571, n. 5. STEEVENS.

⁷ — *be advis'd;*] That is, be cool; be cautious; be discreet.

JOHNSON.

BRA. O thou foul thief, where hast thou stow'd
my daughter?

Damn'd as thou art, thou hast enchanted her:
For I'll refer me to all things of sense,
If she in chains of magick were not bound,
Whether a maid—so tender, fair, and happy;
So opposite to marriage, that she shunn'd
The wealthy curled darlings of our nation,⁸—
Would ever have, to incur a general mock,
Run from her guardage to the sooty bosom
Of such a thing as thou; to fear, not to delight.⁹

⁸ *The wealthy curled darlings of our nation,*] *Curled is elegantly and ostentatiously dressed.* He had not the hair particularly in his thoughts. JOHNSON.

On another occasion Shakspeare employs the same expression, and evidently alludes to *the hair*:

“ If she first meet the *curled* Antony,” &c.

Sir W. D'Avenant uses the same expression in his *Just Italian*, 1630:

“ The *curl'd* and filken nobles of the town.”

Again:

“ Such as the *curled* youth of Italy.”

I believe Shakspeare has the same meaning in the present instance.

Thus, Turnus, in the 12th *Æneid*, speaking of *Æneas*:

“ ——— *foedare in pulvere crines*

“ *Vibratos calido ferro,*——.” STEEVENS.

That Dr. Johnson was mistaken in his interpretation of this line, is ascertained by our poet's *Rape of Lucrece*, where the hair is not merely alluded to, but expressly mentioned, and the epithet *curled* is added as characteristick of a person of the highest rank:

“ Let him have time to tear his *curled hair*.”

Tarquin, a king's son, is the person spoken of. Edgar, when he was “ proud in heart and mind,” *curl'd his hair*. MALONE.

⁹ *Of such a thing as thou; to fear, not to delight.*] To fear, in the present instance, may mean—to terrify. So, in *K. Henry V.* P. III:

“ For Warwick was a bug that fear'd us all.”

The line spoken by Brabantio is redundant in its measure. It might originally have ran—

Of such as thou; to fear, not to delight.

Mr. Rowe, however, seems to have selected the words I would omit, as proper to be put into the mouth of Horatio, who applies them to Lothario:

“ To be the prey of such a thing as thou art.” STEEVENS.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 407

[Judge me the world,² if 'tis not gross in sense,
That thou hast practis'd on her with foul charms;
Abus'd her delicate youth with drugs, or minerals,
That waken motion:³—I'll have it disputed on:

—— to fear, not to delight.] To one more likely to terrify than delight her. So, in the next scene (Brabantio is again the speaker):

“To fall in love with what *she* fear'd to look on.”

Mr. Steevens supposes *fear* to be a verb here, used in the sense of to terrify; a signification which it formerly had. But *fear*, I apprehend, is a substantive, and poetically used for the *object* of fear.

MALONE.

² [Judge me the world, &c.] The lines following in crotchets are not in the first edition. [1622.] POPE.

³ Abus'd her delicate youth with drugs, or minerals,

That waken motion:] [Old copy—*weaken*.] Hanmer reads with probability:

That waken motion:——. JOHNSON.

Motion in a subsequent scene of this play is used in the very sense in which Sir T. Hanmer would employ it:—“But we have reason to cool our raging *motions*, our carnal stings, our unbitted lusts.”

STEEVENS.

To *weaken motion* is, to impair the faculties. It was till very lately, and may with some be still an opinion, that philtres or love potions have the power of perverting, and of course weakening or impairing both the sight and judgement, and of procuring fondness or dotage toward any unworthy object who administers them. And by *motion*, Shakspeare means the senses which are depraved and weakened by these fascinating mixtures. RITSON.

The folio, where alone this passage is found, reads:

That weaken motion:——.

I have adopted Sir Thomas Hanmer's emendation, because I have a good reason to believe that the words *weaken* and *waken* were in Shakspeare's time pronounced alike, and hence the mistake might easily have happened. *Motion* is elsewhere used by our poet precisely in the sense required here. So, in *Cymbeline*:

“—— for there's no *motion*

“That tends to vice in man, but I affirm

“It is the woman's part.”

Again, in *Hamlet*:

“—— sense sure you have,

“Else could you not have *motion*.”

'Tis probable, and palpable to thinking.
I therefore apprehend and do attach thee,]

Again, in *Measure for Measure* :

" ——— one who never feels

" The wanton stings and *motions* of the sense."

So also, in *A Mad World, my Masters*, by Middleton, 1608 :

" And in myself sooth up adulterous *motions*,

" And such an appetite as I know damns me."

We have in the play before us—*waken'd wrath*, and I think in some other play of Shakspeare—*waken'd love*. So, in our poet's 117th Sonnet :

" But shoot not at me in your *waken'd bate*."

Ben Jonson in his preface to *Volpone* has a similar phraseology :
" ——— it being the office of the comick poet to *stirre up gentle affections*."

Mr. Theobald reads—That weaken *notion*, i. e. says he, her right conception and idea of things ; understanding, judgement.

This reading it must be acknowledged, derives some support from a passage in *King Lear*, Act II. sc. iv.—" either his *notion* *weakens*, or his discernings are lethargy'd." But the objection to it is, that no opiates or intoxicating potions or powders of any sort can distort or pervert the *intelle&ts*, but by destroying them for a time; nor was it ever at any time believed by the most credulous, that *love-powders*, as they were called, could *weaken the understanding*, though it was formerly believed that they could *fascinate the affections* : or in other words, *waken* motion.

Brabantio afterwards asserts,

" That with some mixtures powerful o'er the *blood*,

" He wrought upon her."

(Our poet, it should be remembered, in almost all his plays uses *blood* for *passion*. See p. 257, n. 2 ; and Vol. XI. p. 296, n. 2, and p. 578, n. 5.) And one of the senators asks Othello, not, whether he had *weaken'd* Desdemona's *understanding*, but whether he did

" ——— by indirect and forced courses

" Subdue and *poison* this young maid's *affections*."

The notion of the efficacy of love-powders was formerly so prevalent, that in the parliament summoned by King Richard the Third, on his usurping the throne, it was publicly urged as a charge against lady Grey, that she had bewitched King Edward the Fourth, " by strange potions and amorous *charms*." See Fabian, p. 495 ; Speed, p. 913, edit. 1632 ; and Habington's *History of King Edward the Fourth*, p. 35. MALONE.

In the passages adduced by Mr. Steevens and Mr. Malone, ¹⁰

For an abuser of the world,⁴ a practiser
Of arts inhibited and out of warrant:—
Lay hold upon him; if he do resist,
Subdue him at his peril.

OTH. Hold your hands,
Both you of my inclining, and the rest:
Were it my cue to fight, I should have known it
Without a prompter.—Where will you that I go
To answer this your charge?

BRA. To prison; till fit time
Of law, and course of direct session,
Call thee to answer.

OTH. What if I do obey?
How may the duke be therewith satisfied;
Whose messengers are here about my side,

prove that *motion* signifies *lustful desires*, it may be remarked that the word derives this *peculiar meaning*, either from some epithet, or restrictive mode of expression, with which it stands connected. But, had it been used *absolutely*, in *that sense*, with what consistency could Brabantio attribute the emotions of lust in his daughter, to the irritation of those very philtres, which he, in the self-same breath, represents as abating it?

The *drugs or minerals*, with which Othello is charged as having *abused the delicate youth* of Desdemona, were supposed to have accomplished his purpose, by

“ Charming her blood with pleasing heaviness,”
thereby *weakening* MOTION, that is, *subduing her* MAIDEN PUDENCY, and *lulling her* WONTED COYNESS into a *state of acquiescence*.

That this is the sense of the passage, is further evident from what follows; for so *bashful* was she of disposition,

“ ——— that her MOTION

“ Blush'd at herself:”

and, therefore, adds Brabantio:

“ ——— I vouch again,

“ That with some mixtures powerful o'er the blood,

“ Or with some dram conjur'd to this effect,

“ He wrought upon her.” HENLEY.

⁴ For an *abuser* &c.] The first quarto reads—*Such an abuser* &c. STEEVENS.

Upon some present business of the state,
To bring⁵ me to him?

OFF. 'Tis true, most worthy signior,
The duke's in council; and your noble self,
I am sure, is sent for.

BRA. How! the duke in council!
In this time of the night!—Bring him away:
Mine's not an idle cause: the duke himself,
Or any of my brothers of the state,
Cannot but feel this wrong, as 'twere their own:
For if such actions may have passage free,
Bond-slaves, and pagans,⁶ shall our statesmen be.

[*Exeunt.*]

⁵ To bring—] The quartos read—To bear. STEEVENS.

⁶ Bond-slaves, and pagans,] Mr. Theobald alters *pagan* to *pageants*, for this reason, "That pagans are as strict and moral all the world over, as the most regular Christians, in the preservation of private property." But what then? The speaker had not this high opinion of pagan morality, as is plain from hence, that this important discovery, so much to the honour of paganism, was first made by our editor. WARBURTON.

The meaning of these expressions of Brabantio seem to have been mistaken. I believe the morality of either christians or pagans was not in our author's thoughts. He alludes to the common condition of all blacks, who come from their own country, both *slaves* and *pagans*; and uses the word in contempt of Othello and his complexion.—If this Moor is now suffered to escape with impunity, it will be such an encouragement to his black countrymen, that we may expect to see all the first offices of our state filled up by the *pagans* and *bond-slaves* of Africa. STEEVENS.

In our author's time *pagan* was a very common expression of contempt. So, in *King Henry IV.* P. II:

"What *pagan* may that be?"

See Vol. IX. p. 68, n. 8. MALONE.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 411

S C E N E III.

The same. A Council-Chamber.

The Duke, and Senators, sitting at a table; Officers attending.

DUKE. There is no composition¹ in these news,²
That gives them credit.

1. SEN. Indeed, they are disproportion'd;
My letters say, a hundred and seven gallies.

DUKE. And mine, a hundred and forty.

2. SEN. And mine, two hundred:
But though they jump not on a just account,
(As in these cases, where the aim reports,³

¹ *There is no composition—*] *Composition*, for consistency, concordancy. WARBURTON.

² — these *news*,] Thus the quarto, 1622, and such was frequently the phraseology of Shakspeare's age. So, in *The Spanish Tragedy*, 1610:

“The *news* are more delightful to his soul,—.”

See also Vol. X. p. 115, n. 9. The folio reads—*this news*.

MALONE.

³ *As in these cases, where the aim reports,*] The folio has—*the aim reports*. But, *they aim reports*, [the reading of the quarto] has a sense sufficiently easy and commodious. Where men *report* not by certain knowledge, but by *aim* and conjecture. JOHNSON.

To *aim* is to conjecture. So, in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*:

“But fearing lest my jealous *aim* might err.”

Again, in the manuscript known by the title of *William and the Werewolf*, in the library of King's College, Cambridge:

“No man upon mold, might *ayme* the number.” P. 56.

STEEVENS.

— *where the aim reports,*] In these cases where conjecture or

'Tis oft with difference,) yet do they all confirm
A Turkish fleet, and bearing up to Cyprus.

DUKE. Nay, it is possible enough to judgement;
I do not so secure me in the error,
But the main article I do approve
In fearful sense.

SAILOR. [*Within.*] What ho! what ho! what ho!

Enter an Officer with a Sailor.

OFF. A messenger from the gallies.

DUKE. Now? the business?

SAIL. The Turkish preparation makes for Rhodes;
So was I bid report here to the state,
By signior Angelo.⁹

DUKE. How say you by this change?

I. SEN.

This cannot be
By no assay of reason; ² 'tis a pageant,
To keep us in false gaze: When we consider
The importance of Cyprus to the Turk,
And let ourselves again but understand,
That, as it more concerns the Turk than Rhodes,
So may he with more facile question³ bear it,

suspicion tells the tale. *Aim* is again used as a substantive, in this sense, in *Julius Cæsar*:

"What you would work me to, I have some *aim*."

MALONE.

⁹ By signior Angelo.] This hemistich is wanting in the first quarto. STEEVENS.

² By no assay of reason;] Bring it to the test, examine it by reason as we examine metals by the *assay*, it will be found counterfeit by all trials. JOHNSON.

³ — with more facile question —] *Question* is for the act of seeking. With more easy endeavour. JOHNSON.

So may he with more facile question bear it,] That is, he may

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 413

For that it stands not⁴ in such warlike brace,⁵
But altogether lacks the abilities
That Rhodes is drefs'd in:—if we make thought of
this,

We must not think, the Turk is so unskilful,
To leave that latest, which concerns him first;
Neglecting an attempt of ease, and gain,
To wake, and wage, a danger profitless.⁶

DUKE. Nay, in all confidence, he's not for
Rhodes.

OFF. Here is more news.

Enter a Messenger.

MESS. The Ottomites, reverend and gracious,
Steering with due course toward the isle of Rhodes,
Have there injointed them with an after fleet.

I. SEN. Ay, so I thought: '—How many, as you
gues's?

MESS. Of thirty sail: and now do they re-stem⁸

carry it with less dispute, with less opposition. I don't see how the
word *question* can signify the *act of seeking*, though the word *quest*
may. M. MASON.

⁴ *For that it stands not &c.*] The seven following lines are added
since the first edition. POPE.

⁵ ——— *warlike brace*,] State of defence. To arm was called to
brace on the armour. JOHNSON.

⁶ *To wake, and wage, a danger profitless.*] To *wage* here, as in
many other places in Shakspeare, signifies to fight, to combat.

Thus, in *King Lear*:

“ To *wage* against the enmity of the air.”

It took its rise from the common expression, to *wage war*.

STEEVENS.

⁷ *Ay, so &c.*] This line is not in the first quarto. STEEVENS.

⁸ ——— *do they re-stem* —] The quartos mean to read, —*re-sterne*,
though in the first of them the word is misspelt. STEEVENS.

Their backward course, bearing with frank appearance

Their purposes toward Cyprus.—Signior Montano,
Your trusty and most valiant servitor,
With his free duty, recommends you thus,
And prays you to believe him.⁹

DUKE. 'Tis certain then for Cyprus.—
Marcus Lucchese,² is he not in town?

I. SEN. He's now in Florence.

DUKE. Write from us; wish him³ post-post-haste:
despatch.⁴

I. SEN. Here comes Brabantio, and the valiant
Moor.

*Enter BRABANTIO, OTHELLO, IAGO, RODERIGO, and
Officers.*

DUKE. Valiant Othello, we must straight employ
you
Against the general enemy Ottoman.⁵

⁹ *And prays you to believe him.*] He entreats you not to doubt the truth of this intelligence. JOHNSON.

² *Marcus Lucchese,*] The old copies have *Luccicos*. Mr. Stevens made the correction. MALONE.

³ — *wish him* —] i. e. recommend, desire him. See Vol. IV. p. 462, n. 4, and other places. REED.

⁴ — *wish him post-post-haste: despatch.*] i. e. tell him we wish him to make all possible haste. *Post-haste* is before in this play used adjectively:

“ And he requires your haste-*post-haste* appearance.”

All messengers in the time of Shakspeare were enjoined, “ *Haste haste; for thy life, post haste.*”

The reading of the text is that of the quarto, 1622. The folio reads:

Write from us to him, post, post-haste dispatch. MALONE.

⁵ *Valiant Othello, we must straight employ you
Against the general enemy Ottoman.*] It is part of the policy of the Venetian state never to entrust the command of an army to a

THE MOOR OF VENICE 415

I did not see you; welcome, gentle signior;

[To BRABANTIO.

We lack'd your counsel and your help to-night.

BRA. So did I yours: Good your grace, pardon me;
Neither my place, nor aught I heard of business,
Hath rais'd me from my bed; nor doth the general
care⁶

Take hold⁷ on me; for my particular grief

native. "To exclude, therefore, (says Contareno, as translated by Lewkenor, 4to. 1599,) out of our estate the danger or occasion of any such ambitious enterprises, our ancestors held it a better course to defend the dominions on the continent with foreign mercenary foldiers, than with their homebred citizens." Again: "Their charges and yearly occasions of disbursement are likewise very great; for alwaies they do entertain in honourable fort with great provision a *captaine generall*, who alwaies is a *stranger borne*."

MALONE.

It was usual for the Venetians to employ strangers and even Moors in their wars. See *The White Devil*, or *Vittoria Corambona*, Act V. sc. i. See also *Howell's Letters*, B. I. S. 1. Letter xxviii.

REED.

⁶ — *general care* —] The word *care*, which encumbers the verse, was probably added by the players. Shakspeare uses *the general* as a substantive, though, I think, not in this sense. JOHNSON.

The word *general*, when used by Shakspeare as a substantive, always implies the populace, not the publick: and if it were used here as an adjective, without the word *care*, it must refer to *grief* in the following line, a word which may properly denote a private sorrow, but not the alarm which a nation is supposed to feel on the approach of a formidable enemy. M. MASON.

I suppose the author wrote—

Rais'd me from bed; nor doth the general care——.

and not

Hath rais'd me from my bed; &c.

The words in the Roman character I regard as playhouse interpolations, by which the metre of this tragedy is too frequently deranged. STEEVENS.

—— *general care* ——]

"—— *juvenumque prodis*,

"Publica cura." Hor. STEEVENS.

⁷ *Take hold*——] The first quarto reads—*Take any hold*.

STEEVENS.

Is of so flood-gate and o'er-bearing nature,
That it engluts and swallows other sorrows,
And it is still itself.

DUKE. Why, what's the matter?

BRA. My daughter! O, my daughter!

SEN. Dead?

BRA. Ay, to me;

She is abus'd, stol'n from me, and corrupted
By spells and medicines bought of mountebanks:⁷
For nature so preposterously to err,
Being not deficient, blind, or lame of sense,⁸
Sans witchcraft could not⁹——

⁷ By *spells and medicines bought of mountebanks*:] Rymer has ridiculed this circumstance as unbecoming (both for its weakness and superstition,) the gravity of the accuser, and the dignity of the tribunal: but his criticism only exposes his own ignorance. The circumstance was not only exactly in character, but urged with the greatest address, as the thing chiefly to be insisted on. For, by the Venetian law, the giving love potions was very criminal, as Shakspeare, without question well understood. Thus the law, *Dei maleficii et barbarie*, cap. xvii. of the code, intitled, “Della promission del maleficio.” “Statuimo etiamdio, che-se alcun homo, o femina, harra fatto maleficii, iquali se dimandano vulgarmente *amatorie*, o veramente alcuni altri maleficii, che alcun homo o femina se haveffon in odio, sia frusta et bollado, et che hara confegliado patisca simile pena.” And therefore in the preceding scene Brabantio calls them,

“——arts inhibited, and out of warrant.”

WARBURTON.

Though I believe Shakspeare knew no more of this Venetian law than I do, yet he was well acquainted with the edicts of that sapient prince, king James the First, against

“——practisers

“Of arts inhibited and out of warrant.” STEEVENS.

See p. 407, n. 3. MALONE.

⁸ *Being not* &c.] This line is wanting in the first quarto.

STEEVENS.

⁹ *For nature so preposterously to err*,——

Sans witchcraft could not——] The grammar requires we should read:

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 417

DUKE. Whoe'er he be, that, in this foul proceeding,

Hath thus beguil'd your daughter of herself,
And you of her, the bloody book of law
You shall yourself read in the bitter letter,
After your own sence; yea, though our proper son
Stood in your action.^a

BRA. Humbly I thank your grace.
Here is the man, this Moor; whom now, it seems,
Your special mandate, for the state affairs,
Hath hither brought.

DUKE and SEN. We are very sorry for it.

DUKE. What, in your own part, can you say to
this? [To OTHELLO.

BRA. Nothing, but this is so.

OTH. Most potent, grave, and reverend signiors,
My very noble and approv'd good masters,—

For nature so preposterously err, &c.

without the article *to*; and then the sentence will be complete.

M. MASON.

Were I certain that our author designed the sentence to be complete, and not to be cut short by the Duke's interruption, I should readily adopt the amendment proposed by Mr. M. Mason.

STEEVENS.

Omission is at all times the most dangerous mode of emendation, and here assuredly is unnecessary. We have again and again had occasion to observe, that Shakspeare frequently begins to construct a sentence in one mode, and ends it in another. See p. 87, n. 6. Here he uses *could not*, as if he had written, *has not the power or capacity to*, &c. It is not in nature *so to err*; she knows not how to do it. MALONE.

Mr. Malone's opinion relative to omissions, is contradicted by an ancient canon of criticism,—*Præferatur lectio brevior*. I think it, in respect to Shakspeare, of all other modes of emendation the least reprehensible. See the Advertisement prefixed to this edition of our author, and Vol. III. p. 67, 68, n. 6. STEEVENS.

^a *Stood in your action.*] Were the man exposed to your charge or accusation. JOHNSON.

That I have ta'en away this old man's daughter,
 It is most true; true, I have married her;
 The very head and front of my offending³
 Hath this extent, no more. Rude am I in my
 speech,
 And little blest'd with the set phrase of peace;⁴
 For since these arms of mine had seven years' pith,
 Till now some nine moons wasted, they have us'd
 Their dearest action⁵ in the tented field;

³ *The very head and front of my offending—*] The *main*, the *whole*, unextenuated. JOHNSON.

"*Frons causæ non satis honesta est*," is a phrase used by Quintilian. STEEVENS.

A similar expression is found in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*, 1590:

"The man that in the *forehead* of his fortunes

"Bears figures of renowne and miracle."

Again, in *Troilus and Cressida*:

"So rich advantage of a promis'd glory,

"As smiles upon the *forehead* of this action." MALONE.

⁴ *And little blest'd with the set phrase of peace;*] *Soft* is the reading of the folio. JOHNSON.

This apology, if addressed to his mistress, had been well expressed. But what he wanted, in speaking before a Venetian senate, was not the *soft* blandishments of speech, but the art and method of masculine eloquence. The old quarto reads it, therefore, as I am persuaded Shakspeare wrote:

——— *the set phrase of peace.* WARBURTON.

Soft may have been used for *still* and *calm*, as opposed to the clamours of war. So, in *Coriolanus*.

"——— Say to them,

"Thou art their *soldier*, and, being bred in *broils*,

"Hast not the *soft* way, which thou dost confess

"Were fit for thee to use."

Again, in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

"——— 'Tis a worthy deed,

"And shall become you well, to entreat your captain

"To *soft* and gentle speech." MALONE.

⁵ *Their dearest action—*] That is, *dear*, for which much is paid, whether money or labour; *dear action*, is action performed at great expence, either of ease or safety. JOHNSON.

Their dearest action is their most important action. See Vol. XL p. 649, n. 7. MALONE.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 419

And little of this great world can I speak,
More than pertains to feats of broil and battle;
And therefore little shall I grace my cause,
In speaking for myself: Yet, by your gracious pa-
tience,
I will a round unvarnish'd⁶ tale deliver
Of my whole course of love; what drugs, what
charms,
What conjuration, and what mighty magick,
(For such proceeding I am charg'd withal,)
I won his daughter with.⁷

BRA. A maiden never bold;
Of spirit so still and quiet, that her motion

Instead of their *dearest action*, we should say in modern language,
their *best exertion*. STEEVENS.

I should give these words a more natural signification, and sup-
pose that they mean—their *favourite action*, the action most dear
to them. Othello says afterwards:

“ ————— I do agnize

“ A natural and prompt alacrity

“ I find in hardness.” M. MASON.

⁶ — *unvarnish'd*—] The second quarto reads—*unravish'd*.

STEEVENS.

⁷ *I won his daughter with.*] [The first quarto and folio—*I won
his daughter.*] i. e. I won his daughter *with*: and so all the modern
editors read, adopting an interpolation made by the editor of the
second folio, who was wholly unacquainted with our poet's metre
and phraseology. In *Timon of Athens* we have the same elliptical
expression:

“ Who had the world as my confectionary,

“ The mouths, the tongues, the eyes, and hearts of men,

“ At duty, more than I could frame *employment* [for].”

See also Vol. XIII. p. 235, n. 5, where several other instances
of a similar phraseology are collected. MALONE.

As my sentiments concerning the merits of the second folio are
diametrically opposite to Mr. Malone's opinion of it, I have not dis-
placed a grammatical to make room for an ungrammatical expression.

What Mr. Malone has styled “similar phraseology,” I should
not hesitate to call, in many instances, congeniality of omissions
and blunders made by transcribers, players, or printers.

Blush'd at herself; ⁸ And she,—in spite of nature,
Of years, of country, credit, every thing,—
To fall in love with what she fear'd to look on?
It is a judgement maim'd, and most imperfect,
That will confess—perfection so could err
Against all rules of nature; and must be driven
To find out practices of cunning hell,
Why this should be. I therefore vouch again,
That with some mixtures powerful o'er the blood,
Or with some dram conjur'd to this effect,
He wrought upon her.

DUKE. To vouch this, is no proof;⁹
Without more certain and more overt test,²
'Than these thin habits, and poor likelihoods
Of modern seeming,³ do prefer against him.

I. SEN. But, Othello, speak;—
Did you by indirect and forced courses
Subdue and poison this young maid's affections?
Or came it by request, and such fair question
As soul to soul affordeth?

The more I am become acquainted with the ancient copies, the less confidence I am disposed to place in their authority, as often as they exhibit anomalous language, and defective metre. STEEVENS.

⁸ *Blush'd at herself;*] Mr. Pope reads—at *itself*, but without necessity. Shakspeare, like other writers of his age, frequently uses the *personal*, instead of the *neutral* pronoun. STEEVENS.

⁹ *To vouch &c.*] The first folio unites this speech with the preceding one of *Brabantio*; and instead of *certain* reads *wider*.

STEEVENS.

² — overt test,] Open proofs, external evidence. JOHNSON.

³ — thin habits,—

Of modern seeming,] Weak show of slight appearance.

JOHNSON.

So *modern* is generally used by Shakspeare. See Vol. VI. p. 251, n. 9; and Vol. VII. p. 537, n. 2. MALONE.

The first quarto reads:

“ *These* are thin habits, and poore likelyhoods

“ *Of modern seemings* you prefer against him.” STEEVENS.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 421

Oth. I do beseech you,
Send for the lady to the Sagittary,⁴
And let her speak of me before her father:
If you do find me foul in her report,
The trust, the office, I do hold of you,⁵
Not only take away, but let your sentence
Even fall upon my life.

Duke. Fetch Desdemona hither.

Oth. Ancient, conduct them; you best know the
place.— [*Exeunt IAGO and Attendants.*]
And, till she come, as truly⁶ as to heaven
I do confess⁷ the vices of my blood,
So justly to your grave ears I'll present
How I did thrive in this fair lady's love,
And she in mine.

Duke. Say it, Othello.

Oth. Her father lov'd me; oft invited me;
Still question'd me the story of my life,
From year to year; the battles, sieges, fortunes,
That I have pass'd.
I ran it through, even from my boyish days,
To the very moment that he bade me tell it.
Wherein I spake of most disastrous chances,
Of moving accidents, by flood, and field;

⁴ — *the Sagittary,*] So the folio here and in a former passage. The quarto in both places reads—the *Sagittar*. MALONE.

The *Sagittary* means the sign of the fictitious creature so called, i. e. an animal compounded of man and horse, and armed with a bow and quiver. See Vol. XI. p. 434, n. 5. STEEVENS.

⁵ *The trust, &c.*] This line is wanting in the first quarto.

STEEVENS.

⁶ — *as truly* —] The first quarto reads—as *faithful*.

STEEVENS.

⁷ *I do confess* &c.] This line is omitted in the first quarto.

STEEVENS.

Of hair-breadth scapes i' the imminent deadly
breach;

Of being taken by the insolent foe,
And sold to slavery; of my redemption thence,
And portance in my travel's history:⁸

Wherein of antres vast,⁹ and deserts idle,⁸

⁸ *And portance &c.*] I have restored—
And with it all my travel's history,
from the old edition. It is in the rest,

And portance in my travel's history.

Rymer, in his criticism, on this play, has changed it to *portent*, instead of *portance*. POPE.

Mr. Pope has restored a line to which there is a little objection, but which has no force. I believe *portance* was the author's word in some revised copy. I read thus:

Of being—fold

To slavery, of my redemption thence,

And portance in't; my travel's history.

My redemption from slavery, and behaviour in it. JOHNSON.

I doubt much whether this line, as it appears in the folio, came from the pen of Shakspeare. The reading of the quarto may be *weak*, but it is sense; but what are we to understand by my demeanour, or my sufferings, (which ever is the meaning,) *in my travel's history*? MALONE.

By—my portance in my travel's history, perhaps our author meant—my behaviour in my travels as described in my history of them.

Portance is a word already used in *Coriolanus*:

“ ———— took from you

“ The apprehension of his present *portance*,

“ Which gibingly, ungravely, he did fashion,” &c.

Spenser, in the third Canto of the second Book of the *Fair Queen*, likewise uses it:

“ But for in court gay *portance* he perceiv'd.”

STEEVENS.

⁹ *Wherein of antres vast, &c.*] Discourses of this nature made the subject of the politest conversations, when voyages into, and discoveries of, the new world were all in vogue. So, when the Bastard Faulconbridge in *King John*, describes the behaviour of upstart greatness, he makes one of the essential circumstances of it to be this kind of table-talk. The fashion then running altogether in this way, it is no wonder a young lady of quality should be struck with the history of an adventurer. So that Rymer, who professedly ridicules this whole circumstance, and the noble author

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 423

Rough quarries, rocks, and hills whose heads touch
heaven,
It was my hint to speak,³ such was the process;

of the *Charactericks*, who more obliquely sneers at it, only expose their own ignorance. WARBURTON.

Whoever ridicules this account of the progress of love, shows his ignorance, not only of history, but of nature and manners. It is no wonder that, in any age, or in any nation, a lady, recluse, timorous, and delicate, should desire to hear of events and scenes which she could never see, and should admire the man who had endured dangers, and performed actions, which, however, great, were yet magnified by her timidity. JOHNSON.

—— *autres* —] French, grottos. POPE.

Caves and dens. JOHNSON.

² —— *and desarts* idle,] Every mind is liable to absence and inadvertency, else Pope [who reads—*desarts wild*,] could never have rejected a word so poetically beautiful. *Idle* is an epithet used to express the infertility of the chaotick state, in the Saxon translation of the Pentateuch. JOHNSON.

So, in *The Comedy of Errors* :

“ Usurping ivy, briar, or *idle* moss.”

Mr. Pope might have found the epithet *wild* in all the three last folios. STEEVENS.

The epithet, *idle*, which the ignorant editor of the second folio did not understand, and therefore changed to *wild*, is confirmed by another passage in this act : “ —— either to have it steril with *idleness*, or manured with industry.” MALONE.

Virgil applies *ignavus* to *woods* in the same way :

“ —— Iratus sylvam devexit arator,

“ Et *nemora* evertit multos *ignava* per annos.”

Georg. II. v. 207. HOLT WHITE.

³ *It was my hint to speak*,] This implies it as done by a trap laid for her : but the old quarto reads *bent*, i. e. use, custom. [*Hint* is the reading of the folio.] WARBURTON.

Hent is not *use* in Shakspeare, nor, I believe, in any other author. *Hint*, or *cue*, is commonly used for occasion of speech, which is explained by, *such is the process*, that is, the course of the tale required it. If *bent* be restored, it may be explained by *bundle*. I had a *bundle*, or *opportunity*, to speak of cannibals.

JOHNSON.

Hent occurs at the conclusion of the 4th act of *Measure for Measure*.

Devour up my discourse:⁵ Which I observing,
Took once a pliant hour; and found good means
To draw from her a prayer of earnest heart,
That I would all my pilgrimage dilate,
Whereof by parcels she had something heard,
But not intently:⁶ I did consent;

⁵ ——— and with a greedy ear
Devour up my discourse:] So, in Marlowe's *Luſt's Dominion*,
written before 1593:

" Hang both your *greedy ears* upon my lips;

" Let them *devour my ſpeech*."

Again, in Spenser's *Faery Queene*, B. VI. c. ix:

" Whyleft thus he talkt, the *knight with greedy eare*

" Hong ſtill upon his melting mouth attent." MALONE.

Both theſe phraſes occur in Tully. " Non ſemper implet *aures* meas, ita ſunt *avida* & capaces." *Orat.* 104. " Nos hinc *veremus* literas—" *Ad. Attic.* iv. 14. *Auribus avidis* captare, may alſo be found in Ovid, *De Ponto*. STEVENS.

" Iliacoſque iterum demens audire labores

" Expoſcit, pendetque iterum narrantis ab ore." *Virg.*
M. MASON.

⁶ But not intently:] Thus the eldeſt quarto. The firſt folio reads—*inſtintively*; the ſecond,—*diſtintively*.

The old word, however, may ſtand. *Intention* and *attention* were once ſynonymous. So, in a play called *The Iſle of Gulls*, 1606: " Grace! at fitting down, they cannot *intend* it for hunger." i. e. *attend* to it. Deſdemona, who was often called out of the room on the ſcore of houſe-affairs, could not have heard Othello's tale *intently*, i. e. with *attention to all its parts*.

Again, in Chapman's verſion of the *Iliad*, B. VI:

" Heſtor *intends* his brother's will; but firſt" &c.

Again, in the tenth Book:

" ——— all with *intetive ear*

" Converted to the enemies' tents——."

Again, in the eighth Book of the *Odſſey*:

" For our ſhips know th' expreſſed minds of men;

" And will ſo moſt *intetively* retaine

" Their ſcopes appointed, that they never erre."

STEVENS.

Shakſpeare has already uſed the word in the ſame ſenſe in his *Merry Wives of Windſor*: " ——— ſhe did courſe over my exteriora with ſuch a greedy *intention*." See alſo Vol. XI. p. 528, n. 4.

And often did beguile her of her tears,
When I did speak of some distressful stroke,
That my youth suffer'd. My story being done,
She gave me for my pains a world of sighs :
She swore,—In faith, 'twas strange, 'twas passing
strange ;

'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful :
She wish'd, she had not heard it; yet she wish'd
That heaven had made her such a man: she thank'd
me :

And bade me, if I had a friend that lov'd her,
I should but teach him how to tell my story,
And that would woo her. Upon this hint, I spake:
She lov'd me for the dangers I had pass'd;
And I lov'd her, that she did pity them.
This only is the witchcraft I have us'd;
Here comes the lady, let her witness it.

Enter DESDEMONA, IAGO, and Attendants.

DUKE. I think, this tale would win my daughter too.—

**Good Brabantio,
Take up this mangled matter at the best:
Men do their broken weapons rather use,
Than their bare hands.**

BRA. I pray you, hear her speak;
If she confess, that she was half the wooer,
Destruction on my head,⁷ if my bad blame

Distinctively was the conjectural emendation of the editor of the second folio, who never examined a single quarto copy. MALONE.

⁶ — *a world of sighs*:] It was *kisses* in the later editions: but this is evidently the true reading. The lady had been forward indeed to give him a *world of kisses* upon a bare recital of his story; nor does it agree with the following lines. POPE.

Sighs is the reading of the quarto, 1622; *kisses* of the folio.

Destruction &c.] The quartos read—*Destruction* MALONE.
light on me.
STEEVENS.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 427

Light on the man!—Come hither, gentle mistress;
Do you perceive in all this noble company,
Where most you owe obedience?

DES. My noble father,
I do perceive here a divided duty:
To you I am bound for life, and education;
My life, and education, both do learn me
How to respect you; you are the lord of duty,⁸
I am hitherto your daughter: But here's my hus-
band;
And so much duty as my mother show'd
To you, preferring you before her father,⁹
So much I challenge that I may profess
Due to the Moor, my lord.

BRA. God be with you!—I have done:—
Please it your grace, on to the state affairs;
I had rather adopt a child, than get it.—
Come hither, Moor:
I here do give thee that with all my heart,
Which,¹ but thou hast already, with all my heart
I would keep from thee.—For your sake, jewel,
I am glad at soul I have no other child;
For thy escape would teach me tyranny,
To hang clogs on them.—I have done, my lord.

DUKE. Let me speak like yourself;² and lay a
sentence,

⁸ ——— *you are the lord of duty,*] The first quarto reads—you are
lord of *all my* duty. STEEVENS.

⁹ *And so much duty as my mother show'd
To you, preferring you before her father, &c.*] Perhaps Shak-
speare had here in his thoughts the answer of the youngest daughter
of *Ina*, king of the West Saxons, to her father, which he seems
to have copied in *King Lear*. See Vol. XIV. p. 2. MALONE.

² *Which, &c.*] This line is omitted in the first quarto.

STEEVENS.

³ *Let me speak like yourself;*] The duke seems to mean, when

Which, as a grise,⁴ or step, may help these lovers
Into your favour.⁵

When remedies are past, the griefs are ended,⁶
By seeing the worst, which late on hopes depended.
To mourn a mischief that is past and gone,
Is the next way to draw new mischief on.⁷

What cannot be preserv'd when fortune takes,
Patience her injury a mockery makes.
The robb'd, that smiles, steals something from the
thief;

He robs himself, that spends a bootless grief.

BRA. So let the Turk of Cyprus us beguile;
We lose it not, so long as we can smile.
He bears the sentence well, that nothing bears
But the free comfort which from thence he hears:⁸

he says he will speak like Brabantio, that he will speak sententiously. JOHNSON.

Let me speak like yourself;] i. e. let me speak as yourself would speak, were you not too much heated with passion. SIR J. REYNOLDS.

⁴ ——— as a grise,] *Grize* from *degrees*. A *grize* is a step. So, in *Timon* :

“ ——— for every *grize* of fortune

“ Is smooth'd by that below.”—

Ben Jonson, in his *Sejanus*, gives the original word.

“ Whom when he saw lie spread on the *degrees*.”

In the will of K. Henry VI. where the dimensions of King's College chapel at Cambridge are set down, the word occurs, as spelt in some of the old editions of Shakspeare: “ ——— from the provost's stall, unto the *greece* called *Gradus Chori*, 90 feet.”

STEVENS.

⁵ *Into your favour.*] This is wanting in the folio, but found in the quarto. JOHNSON.

⁶ *When remedies are past, the griefs are ended,*] This our poet has elsewhere expressed [In *Love's Labour's Lost*, Act V. sc. ii.] by a common proverbial sentence, *Past cure is still past care*. MALONE.

⁷ ——— new mischief on.] The quartos read—*more* mischief.—

STEVENS.

⁸ *But the free comfort which from thence he hears:]* But the moral precepts of consolation, which are liberally bestowed on occasion of the sentence. JOHNSON.

But he bears both the sentence and the sorrow,
That, to pay grief, must of poor patience borrow.
These sentences, to sugar, or to gall,
Being strong on both sides, are equivocal :
But words are words; I never yet did hear,
That the bruise'd heart was pierced through the
ear.⁹

⁹ *But words are words; I never yet did hear,*

That the bruise'd heart was pierced through the ear.] The duke had by sage sentences been exhorting Brabantio to patience, and to forget the grief of his daughter's stolen marriage, to which Brabantio is made very pertinently to reply to this effect: "My lord, I apprehend very well the wisdom of your advice; but though you would *comfort* me, words are but words; and the heart, already *bruise'd*, was never *pierce'd*, or *wounded*, through the ear." It is obvious that the text must be restored thus:

That the bruise'd heart was pieced though the ear.

i. e. that the wounds of sorrow were ever cured, or a man made *heart-whole* merely by the words of consolation. WARBURTON.

Shakspeare was continually changing his first expression for another, either stronger or more uncommon; so that very often the reader, who has not the same continuity or succession of ideas, is at a loss for its meaning. Many of Shakspeare's uncouth strained epithets may be explained, by going back to the obvious and simple expression, which is most likely to occur to the mind in that state. I can imagine the first mode of expression that occurred to the poet was this:

The troubled heart was never cured by words,

To give it poetical force, he altered the phrase:

The wounded heart was never reached through the ear.

Wounded heart he changed to *broken*, and that to *bruised*, as a more common expression. *Reached* he altered to *touched*, and the transition is then easy to *pierced*, i. e. thoroughly *touched*. When the sentiment is brought to this state, the commentator, without this unravelling clue, expounds *piercing the heart* in its common acceptation *wounding the heart*, which making in this place nonsense, is corrected to *pieced the heart*, which is very stiff, and, as Polonius says, *is a vile phrase*. SIR J. REYNOLDS.

Pierced may be right. The consequence of a *bruise* is sometimes matter collected, and this can no way be cured without *piercing* or letting it out. Thus, in *Hamlet*:

I humbly beseech you, proceed to the affairs of state.

“ It will bat skin and film the ulcerous place,
 “ Whiles rank corruption mining all within,
 “ Infects unseen.”

Again,

“ This is th’ imposthume of much wealth and peace,
 “ That inward breaks, and shows no cause without,
 “ Why the man dies.”

Our author might have had in his memory the following quaint title of an old book : i.e. “ A lytell treatyse called the dysputacyon, or the complaynte of *the herte through perced with the lokynge of the eye*. Imprynted at Londō in Fleteestre at y^e sygne of the sonne by Wynkyn de Worde.” STEEVENS.

*But words are words ; I never yet did hear,
 That the bruis’d heart was pierced through the ear.*] These moral precepts, says Brabantio, may perhaps be founded in wisdom, but they are of no avail. Words after all are but words ; and I never yet heard that consolatory speeches could *reach* and *penetrate* the afflicted heart, through the medium of the ear.

Brabantio here expresses the same sentiment as the father of Hero in *Much Ado about Nothing*, when he derides the attempts of those comforters who in vain endeavour to

“ Charm *ache* with *air*, and *agony* with *words*.”

Our author has in various places shewn a fondness for this antithesis between the *heart* and *ear*. Thus, in his *Venus and Adonis*:

“ This dismal cry rings sadly in her *ear*,
 “ Through which it enters, to surprise her *heart*.”

Again, in *Much Ado about Nothing*: “ My cousin tells him in his *ear*, that he is in her *heart*.”

Again, in *Cymbeline*:

“ — I have such a *heart* as both mine *ears*
 “ Must not in haste abuse.”

Again, in his *Rape of Lucrece*:

“ His *ear* her prayers admits, but his *heart* granteth
 “ No *penetrable* entrance to her plaining.”

A doubt has been entertained concerning the word *pierced*, which Dr. Warburton supposed to mean *wounded*, and therefore substituted *pieced* in its room. But *pierced* is merely a figurative expression, and means not *wounded*, but penetrated, in a metaphorical sense ; thoroughly affected ; as in the following passage in Shakspeare’s 46th Sonnet:

“ My *heart* doth plead, that thou in him dost lie ;
 “ A closet never *pierc’d* with crystal eyes.”

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 431

DUKE. The Turk with a most mighty preparation makes for Cyprus:—Othello, the fortitude of the place is best known to you: And though we have there a substitute of most allow'd sufficiency, yet opinion, a sovereign mistress of effects, throws a more safer voice on you: you must therefore be content to slubber the gloss of your new fortunes* with this more stubborn and boisterous expedition.

So also, in *Love's Labour's Lost*:

“Honest plain words best pierce the ear of grief.”

Again, in his *Rape of Lucrece*:

“With sweetest touches pierce your mistress' ear.”

In a word, a heart pierced through the ear, is a heart which (to use our poet's words elsewhere,) has granted a penetrable entrance to the language of consolation. So, in *The Mirrour for Magistrates*, 1575:

“My piteous plaint—the hardest heart may pierce.”

Spenser has used the word exactly in the same figurative sense in which it is here employed; *Faery Queene*, Book VI. c. ix:

“Whylest thus he talkt, the knight with greedy care

“Hong still upon his melting mouth attent;

“Whose sensefull words empierst his hart so neare,

“That he was rapt with double ravishment.”

And in his Fourth Book, c. viii. we have the very words of the text:

“Her words———

“Which, passing through the eares, would pierce the hart.”

Some persons have supposed that *pierced* when applied metaphorically to the heart, can only be used to express pain; that the poet might have said, *pierced with grief*, or *pierced with complaints*, &c. but that to talk of *piercing* a heart with *consolatory speeches*, is a *catichresis*: but the passage above quoted from Spenser's sixth book shows that there is no ground for the objection. So also, in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*, 1590, we find—

“Nor thee nor them, thrice noble Tamburlaine,

“Shall want my heart to be with gladness pierc'd.”

MALONE.

* ——— to slubber the gloss of your new fortunes—] To *slubber*, on this occasion, is to *obscure*. So, in the First Part of *Jeronimo*, &c. 1605:

“The evening too begins to slubber day.”

The latter part of this metaphor has already occurred in *Macbeth*:

“——— golden opinions———

“Which should be worn now in their newest gloss.”

STEEVENS.

OTH. The tyrant custom, most grave senators,
 Hath made the flinty and steel couch of war
 My thrice-driven bed of down: ³ I do agnize ⁴
 A natural and prompt alacrity,
 I find in hardness; and do undertake
 These present wars ⁵ against the Ottomites.
 Most humbly therefore bending to your state,
 I crave fit disposition for my wife;
 Due reference of place, and exhibition; ⁶

³ — *thrice-driven bed of down:*] A *driven* bed, is a bed for which the feathers are selected, by *driving* with a fan, which separates the light from the heavy. JOHNSON.

⁴ — *I do agnize*—] i. e. acknowledge, confess, avow. So, in *A Summarie Report*, &c. of the Speaker relative to Mary Queen of Scots, 4to. 1586: "— a repentant convert, *agnizing* her Maiesties great mercie" &c. Again, in the old play of *Cambyfes*:

"The tenor of your princely will, from you for to *agnize*."

In this instance, however, it signifies to know; as likewise in the following, from the same piece:

"Why so? I pray you let me *agnize*." STEEVENS.

It is so defined [i. e. to acknowledge] in Bullokar's *English Expofitor*, 8vo. 1616. MALONE.

⁵ *These present wars*—] The quarto, 1622, and the folio, by an error of the press, have—*this* present wars. For the emendation I am responsible. MALONE.

⁶ *I crave fit disposition for my wife;*

Due reference of place, and exhibition; &c.] I desire, that proper *disposition* be made for my wife, that she may have *precedency* and *revenue*, accommodation and *company* suitable to her rank.

For *reference* of place, the old quartos have *reverence*, which Sir T. Hanmer has received. I should read,

Due preference of place,— JOHNSON.

Exhibition is allowance. The word is at present used only at the universities.

So, in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*:

"What maintenance he from his friends receives,

"Like *exhibition* thou shalt have from me."

Again, in *King Edward IV.* by Heywood, 1626:

"Of all the *exhibition* yet bestow'd,

"This woman's liberality likes me best." STEEVENS.

See Vol. XIV. p. 35, n. 4. MALONE.

With such accommodation, and besort,
As levels with her breeding.

DUKE. If you please,
Be't at her father's.

BRA. I'll not have it so.

OTH. Nor I.

DES. Nor I; I would not there reside,
To put my father in impatient thoughts,
By being in his eye. Most gracious duke,
To my unfolding lend a gracious ear;⁶
And let me find a charter in your voice,⁷
To assist my simpleness.⁸

DUKE. What would you, Desdemona?

DES. That I did love the Moor to live with him,
My downright violence and storm of fortunes⁹

⁶ — *Most gracious duke,*
To my unfolding lend a gracious ear;] Thus the quarto, 1622.
The folio, to avoid the repetition of the same epithet, reads:
“ — your *prosperous* ear; i. e. your *propitious* ear. STEEVENS.

⁷ — *a charter in your voice,*] Let your favour *privilege* me. .
JOHNSON.

⁸ To assist *my simpleness.*] The first quarto reads this as an unfinished sentence:

And if *my simpleness* —. STEEVENS.

⁹ *My downright violence and storm of fortunes* —] *Violence* is not *violence suffered*, but *violence acted*. Breach of common rules and obligations. The old quarto has *scorn* of fortune, which is perhaps the true reading. JOHNSON.

I would rather continue to read—*storm of fortunes*, on account of the words that follow, viz. “ May trumpet to the world.”

So, in *King Henry IV.* Part I:

“ — the southern wind

“ Doth play the trumpet to his purposes.”

Again, in *Troilus and Cressida*:

“ — so

“ Doth valour show, and valour's worth, divide

“ In *storms of fortune.*” STEEVENS.

May trumpet to the world ; my heart's subdu'd
Even to the very quality of my lord :^a

So, in *King Henry VIII* :

" An old man broken with the *storms of state*."

The expression in the text is found in Spenser's *Fairy Queen*, Book VI. c. ix :

" Give leave awhile, good father, in this shore

" To rest my barcke, which hath bene beaten late

" With *stormes of fortune* and tempestuous fate."

And Bacon, in his *History of King Henry the Seventh*, has used the same language : " The king in his account of peace and calms did much overcast his *fortunes*, which proved for many years together full of broken seas, tides, and *tempests*."

Mr. M. Mason objects, that Mr. Steevens has not explained these words. Is any explanation wanting? or can he, who has read in *Hamlet*, that a judicious player " in the *tempest* and *whirlwind* of his *passion* should acquire and beget a temperance;" who has heard Falstaff wish for a *tempest* of provocation; and finds in *Truillas and Cressida*—" in the wind and *tempest* of her frown," be at a loss to understand the meaning of a *storm of fortunes*? By her *downright violence and storm of fortunes*, Desdemona without doubt means, the bold and decisive measure she had taken, of following the dictates of passion and giving herself to the Moor; regardless of her parent's displeasure, the forms of her country, and the future inconvenience she might be subject to, by " tying her duty, beauty, wit, and *fortunes*, in an extravagant and wheeling stranger, of here and every where."

On looking into Mr. Edwards's remarks, I find he explains these words nearly in the same manner. " *Downright violence*, (says he,) means, the unbridled impetuosity with which her passion hurried her on to this unlawful marriage; and *storm of fortunes* may signify the hazard she thereby ran, of making shipwreck of her worldly interest. Both very agreeable to what she says a little lower—

" —to his honours, and his valiant parts

" Did I my foul and *fortunes* consecrate." MALONE.

^a *Even to the very quality of my lord*:] The first quarto reads,
Even to the utmost pleasure, &c. STEEVENS.

Quality here means *profession*. " I am so much enamoured of Othello, that I am even willing to endure all the inconveniencies incident to a *military life*, and to attend him to the wars."—" I cannot mervaille, (said Lord Essex to Mr. Ashton, a Puritan preacher who was sent to him in the Tower,) though my protestations are not believed of my enemies, when they so little prevailed with a man of your *quality*." See also p. 128, n. 9.

I saw Othello's visage in his mind;³
 And to his honours, and his valiant parts,
 Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate.
 So that, dear lords, if I be left behind,
 A moth of peace, and he go to the war,
 The rites, for which I love him, are bereft me,
 And I a heavy interim shall support
 By his dear absence: Let me go with him.

OTH. Your voices, lords: ⁴—'beseech you, let her
 will

Have a free way.

Vouch with me, heaven,⁵ I therefore beg it not,

That this is the meaning, appears not only from the reading of the quarto,—“ my heart's subdued, even to the utmost pleasure of my lord, i. e. so as to prompt me to go with him wherever he wishes I should go,” but also from the whole tenour of Desdemona's speech; the purport of which is, that as she had married a soldier, so she was ready to accompany him to the wars, and to consecrate her soul and fortunes to his honours, and his valiant parts; i. e. to attend him wherever his military character and his love of fame should call him. MALONE.

That quality here signifies the Moorish complexion of Othello, and not his military profession, is obvious from what immediately follows:

“ I saw Othello's visage in his mind:”

and also from what the Duke says to Brabantio:

“ If virtue no delighted beauty lack,

“ Your son-in-law is far more fair than black.”

Desdemona, in this speech asserts, that the virtues of Othello had subdued her heart, in spite of his visage; and that, to his rank and accomplishments as a soldier, she had consecrated her soul and her fortunes. HENLEY.

³ I saw Othello's visage in his mind;] It must raise no wonder, that I loved a man of an appearance so little engaging; I saw his face only in his mind; the greatness of his character reconciled me to his form. JOHNSON.

⁴ Your voices, lords:] The folio reads,—Let her have your voice.
 STEEVENS.

⁵ Vouch with me, heaven,] Thus the second quarto and the folio.
 STEEVENS.

These words are not in the original copy, 1622. MALONE.

To please the palate of my appetite ;
Nor to comply with heat, the young affects,
In my distinct and proper satisfaction ;⁶

⁶ *Nor to comply with heat, the young affects,*

In my distinct and proper satisfaction ;] [Old copies—*defunct*] As this has been hitherto printed and stopped, it seems to me a period of as stubborn nonsense as the editors have obtruded upon poor Shakspeare throughout his works. What a preposterous creature is this Othello made, to fall in love with and marry a fine young lady, when *appetite* and *heat*, and *proper satisfaction*, are *dead* and *defunct* in him! (For, *defunct* signifies nothing else, that I know of, either primitively or metaphorically :) But if we may take Othello's own word in the affair, he was not reduced to this fatal state:

“ — or, for I am declin'd

“ Into the vale of years ; yet *that's not much.*”

Again, Why should our poet say, (for so he says as the passage has been pointed) that the young *affect* heat? Youth, certainly, *has* it, and has no occasion or pretence of *affecting* it. And, *again*, after *defunct*, would he add so absurd a collateral epithet as *proper*? But *affects* was not designed here as a verb, and *defunct* was not designed here at all. I have by reading *distinct* for *defunct*, rescued the poet's text from absurdity ; and this I take to be the tenor of what he would say ; “ I do not beg her company with me, merely to please myself ; nor to indulge the heat and *affects* (i. e. affections) of a new-married man, in my own distinct and proper satisfaction ; but to comply with her in her request, and desire, of accompanying me.” *Affects* for *affections*, our author in several other passages uses.

THEOBALD.

Nor to comply with heat, the young affects

In my defunct and proper satisfaction :] i. e. with that heat and new affections which the indulgence of my appetite has raised and created. This is the meaning of *defunct*, which has made all the difficulty of the passage. WARBURTON.

I do not think that Mr. Theobald's emendation clears the text from embarrassment, though it is with a little imaginary improvement received by Sir T. Hanmer, who reads thus :

Nor to comply with heat affects the young,

In my distinct and proper satisfaction.

Dr. Warburton's explanation is not more satisfactory : what made the difficulty will continue to make it. I read,

——— *I beg it not,*

To please the palate of my appetite,

Nor to comply with heat (the young affects

But to be free and bounteous to her mind :
And heaven defend^r your good souls, that you think

*In me defunct) and proper satisfaction;
But to be free and bounteous to her mind.*

Affects stands here, not for *love*, but for *passions*, for that by which any thing is affected. *I ask it not*, says he, *to please appetite, or satisfy loose desires*, the passions of youth which I have now out-lived, or for any particular gratification of myself, but merely that I may indulge the wishes of my wife.

Mr. Upton had, before me, changed *my* to *me*; but he has printed young *affects*, not seeming to know that *affects* could be a noun.

JOHNSON.

Mr. Theobald has observed the impropriety of making Othello confess, that all youthful passions were *defunct* in him; and Sir T. Hanmer's reading [*distinct*] may, I think, be received with only a slight alteration. I would read,

————— *I beg it not,
To please the palate of my appetite,
Nor to comply with heat, and young affects,
In my distinct and proper satisfaction;
But to be &c.*

Affects stands for *affections*, and is used in that sense by Ben Jonson, in *The Case is Altered*, 1609:

“ ——— I shall not need to urge
“ The sacred purity of our *affects*.”

Again, in *Love's Labour's Lost*:

“ For every man with his *affects* is born.”

Again, in *The Wars of Cyrus*, 1594:

“ The frail *affects* and errors of my youth.”

Again, in Middleton's *Inner Temple Masque*, 1619:

“ No doubt *affects* will be subdu'd by reason.”

There is, however, in *The Bondman*, by Massinger, a passage which seems to countenance and explain

————— *the young affects*
In me defunct &c.

“ ————— youthful heats,
“ That look no further than your outward form,
“ Are long since buried in me.”

Timoleon is the speaker. STEEVENS.

I would venture to make the two last lines change places.

————— *I therefore beg it not,
To please the palate of my appetite,
Nor to comply with heat, the young affects;*

I will your serious and great business scant,

*But to be free and bounteous to her mind,
In my defunct and proper satisfaction.*

And would then recommend it to consideration, whether the word *defunct* (which would be the only remaining difficulty,) is not capable of a signification, drawn from the primitive sense of its Latin original, which would very well agree with the context.

TYRWHITT.

I would propose to read—In my *defunct*, or *defenc'd*, &c. i. e. I do not beg her company merely to please the palate of my appetite, nor to comply with the heat of lust which the *young man affects*, i. e. loves and is fond of, in a gratification which I have by marriage *defenc'd*, or inclosed and guarded, and made my own property. *Unproper beds*, in this play, means, beds not peculiar or appropriate to the right owner, but common to other occupiers. In *The Merry Wives of Windsor* for the marriage vow was represented by Ford as the ward and *defence* of purity or conjugal fidelity. "I could drive her then from the ward of her purity, her reputation, and a thousand other her *defences*, which are now too strongly embattled against me." The verb *affect* is more generally, among ancient authors, taken in the construction which I have given to it, than as Mr. Theobald would interpret it. It is so in this very play, "Not to *affect* many proposed matches," means not to *like*, or *be fond of* many proposed matches.

I am persuaded that the word *defunct* must be at all events ejected. Othello talks here of his appetite, and it is very plain that Desdemona to her death was fond of him after wedlock, and that he loved her. How then could his conjugal desires be dead or *defunct*? or how could they be *defunct* or discharged and performed when the marriage was consummated? TOLLET.

Othello here supposes, that his petition for the attendance of his bride, might be ascribed to one of these two motives:—either solicitude for the enjoyment of an unconsummated and honourable marriage;—or the mere gratification of a sensual and selfish passion. But, as neither was the true one, he abjures them both:

Vouch with me heaven, I therefore beg it not

'To please the palate of my appetite;

Nor to comply with heat (—— —)

—— —) and proper satisfaction.

The former, having nothing in it unbecoming, he *simply* disclaims; but the latter, ill according with his season of life (for Othello was now *declin'd into the vale of years*) he assigns a reason for renouncing:

—— — the young affects,

In me *defunct*.——

For she is with me: No, when light-wing'd toys

As if he had said, "I have outlived that wayward impulse of passion, by which younger men are stimulated: those

"——— youthful beats,

"That look no further than the OUTWARD FORM,

"Are long since buried in me."

The supreme object of my heart is

——— to be free and bounteous to her MIND.

By YOUNG *affects*, the poet clearly means those "YOUTHFUL lusts" [ταῖς ΝΕΩΤΕΡΙΚΑΣ παθούσις, *cupiditates rei novæ*, thence JUVENILES, and therefore EFFRENES *cupiditates*,] which St. Paul admonishes Timothy to fly from, and the Romans to MORTIFY.

HENLEY.

For the emendation now offered, [*disjunct*] I am responsible. Some emendation is absolutely necessary, and this appears to me the least objectionable of those which have been proposed. Dr. Johnson, in part following Mr. Upton, reads and regulates the passage thus:

Nor to comply with heat (the young affects

In me defunct) and proper satisfaction.

To this reading there are, I think, three strong objections. The first is, the suppression of the word *being* before *defunct*, which is absolutely necessary to the sense, and of which the omission is so harsh, that it affords an argument against the probability of the proposed emendation. The second and the grand objection is, that it is highly improbable that Othello should declare on the day of his marriage that heat and the youthful affections were dead or defunct in him; that he had outlived the passions of youth. He himself (as Mr. Theobald has observed,) informs us afterwards, that he is "declined into the vale of years;" but adds, at the same time, "yet that's not much." This surely is a decisive proof that the text is corrupt. My third objection to this regulation is, that by the introduction of a parenthesis, which is not found in the old copies, the words *and proper satisfaction* are so unnaturally disjoined from those with which they are connected in sense, as to form a most lame and impotent conclusion; to say nothing of the awkwardness of using the word *proper* without any possessive pronoun prefixed to it.

All these difficulties are done away, by retaining the original word *my*, and reading *disjunct* instead of *defunct*; and the meaning will be, I ask it not for the sake of my *separate* and private enjoyment, by the gratification of appetite, but that I may indulge the wishes of my wife.

The young affects, may either mean the affections or passions of

Of feather'd Cupid feel with wanton dullness

youth, (considering *affectus* as a substantive,) or these words may be connected with *beat*, which immediately precedes: "I ask it not, for the purpose of gratifying that appetite which peculiarly stimulates the young." So, in Spenser's *Faery Queene*, B. V. c. ix:

"Layes of sweete love, and youth's delightful *beat*."

Mr. Tyrwhitt "recommends it to consideration, whether the word *defunct*, is not capable of a signification, drawn from the primitive sense of its Latin original, which would very well agree with the context."

The mere English reader is to be informed, that *defunctus* in Latin signifies *performed, accomplished*, as well as *dead*: but is it probable that Shakspeare was apprized of its bearing that signification? In Bullokar's *English Expofitor*, 8vo. 1616, the work of a physician and a scholar, *defunct* is only defined by the word *dead*; nor has it, I am confident, any other meaning annexed to it in any dictionary or book of the time. Besides; how, as Mr. Tollet has observed, could his conjugal duties be said to be *discharged* or *performed*, at a time when his marriage was not yet consummated?—On this last circumstance however I do not insist, as Shakspeare is very licentious in the use of participles, and might have employed the *past* for the present: but the former objection appears to me fatal.

Proper is here and in other places used for *peculiar*. In this play we have *unproper* beds; not *peculiar* to the rightful owner, but *common* to him and others.

In the present tragedy we have many more uncommon words than *disjunct*: as *facile*, *agnize*, *acerb*, *sequestration*, *injointed*, *congregated*, *guttered*, *sequent*, *extincted*, *exsufflicate*, *indign*, *segregated*, &c.—Iago in a subsequent scene says to Othello, "let us be *conjunctive* in our revenge;" and our poet has *conjunct* in *King Lear*, and *disjoin* and *disjunctive* in two other plays. In *King John* we have *adjunct* used as an adjective:

"Though that my death be *adjunct* to the act,—"

and in *Hamlet* we find *disjoint* employed in like manner:

"Or thinking——"

"Our state to be *disjoint*, and out of frame." MALONE.

As it is highly probable this passage will prove a lasting source of doubt and controversy, the remarks of all the commentators are left before the publick. Sir Thomas Hanmer's *disjunct*, however, appearing to me as apposite a change as Mr. Malone's synonymous *disjunct*, I have placed the former in our text, though perhaps the old reading ought not to have been disturbed, as in the opinion of more than one critic it has been satisfactorily explained by Dr. Johnson and Mr. Henley. STEEVENS.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 44D

My speculative and active instruments,⁸
That my disports corrupt and taint my business,
Let housewives make a skillet of my helm,
And all indign and base adversities
Make head against my estimation!⁹

DUKE. Be it as you shall privately determine,
Either for her stay, or going: the affair cries—
 haste,
And speed must answer it; you must hence to-
 night.

⁷ ——— *defend* &c.] To *defend*, is to forbid. So, in Chaucer's *Wife of Bathes Prologue*, Mr. Tyrwhitt's edit. ver. 5641 :

“ Wher can ye seen in any maner age

“ That highe God *defended* mariage,

“ By expresse word ?”

From *defendre*, Fr. STEEVENS.

⁸ ——— *when light-wing'd toys*

Of *feather'd Cupid* feel *with wanton dulness*

My speculative and active instruments,] Thus the folio, except that instead of *active instruments*, it has *offic'd instrument*. MALONE.

For a particular explanation of the verb—to *feel*, the reader is referred to Vol. VII. p. 469, n. 3.

The quarto reads—

————— *when light-wing'd toys*

And *feather'd Cupid* foils *with wanton dulness*

My speculative and active instruments —.

All these words (in either copy) mean no more than this:—When the pleasures and idle toys of love make me unfit either for seeing the duties of my office, or for the ready performance of them, &c.

STEEVENS.

Speculative instruments, in Shakspeare's language, are the *eyes*; and *active instruments*, the *hands and feet*. So, in *Coriolanus*:

“ ——— where, the other *instruments*

“ Did *see*, hear, devise, instruct, *walk, feel*,” &c.

To *feel* is to close the eyelids of a hawk by running a thread through them. As it is here metaphorically used, it applies very properly to the *speculative instruments*; but *foils*, the reading of the quarto, agrees better with *active instruments*.

Wanton dulness is dulness arising from wanton indulgences.

MALONE.

⁹ ——— *my estimation*!] Thus the folio; the quarto—*reputation*.

STEEVENS.

DES. To-night, my lord?

DUKE. This night.

OTH. With all my heart.

DUKE. At nine i'the morning here we'll meet again.

Othello, leave some officer behind,
And he shall our commission bring to you ;
With such things else of quality and respect,
As doth import you.

OTH. Please your grace, my ancient;
A man he is of honesty, and trust :
To his conveyance I assign my wife,
With what else needful your good grace shall think
To be sent after me.

DUKE. Let it be so.—
Good night to every one.—And, noble signior,
[To BRABANTIO.

If virtue no delighted beauty lack,^a
Your son-in-law is far more fair than black.

I. SEN. Adieu, brave Moor ! use Desdemona
well.

^a *If virtue no delighted beauty lack,*] The meaning, I believe, is, if virtue comprehends every thing in itself, then your virtuous son-in-law of course is beautiful: he has that beauty which delights every one. *Delighted*, for *delighting*; Shakspeare often uses the active and passive participles indiscriminately. Of this practice I have already given many instances. The same sentiment seems to occur in *Twelfth Night*:

“ In nature is no blemish, but the mind;

“ None can be call'd deform'd, but the unkind:

“ *Virtue is beauty*——.” STEEVENS.

Delighted is used by Shakspeare in the sense of *delighting*, or *delightful*. See *Cymbeline*, Act V:

“ Whom best I love, I cross, to make my gift,

“ The more delay'd, *delighted*.” TYRWHITT.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 443

BRA. Look to her, Moor; have a quick eye to
see;³

She has deceiv'd her father, and may thee.

[*Exeunt Duke, Senators, Officers, &c.*]

OTH. My life upon her faith.—Honest Iago,
My Desdemona must I leave to thee:
I pry'thee, let thy wife attend on her;
And bring them after⁴ in the best advantage.⁵—
Come, Desdemona; I have but an hour
Of love, of worldly matters and direction,
To spend with thee: we must obey the time.

[*Exeunt OTHELLO and DESDEMONA.*]

ROD. Iago.

IAGO. What say'st thou, noble heart?

ROD. What will I do, think'st thou?

IAGO. Why, go to bed, and sleep.

ROD. I will incontinently drown myself.

IAGO. Well, if thou dost, I shall never love thee
after it. Why, thou filly gentleman!

ROD. It is silliness to live, when to live is a tor-
ment: and then have we a prescription to die, when
death is our physician.

IAGO. O villainous! I have look'd upon the
world for four times seven years:⁶ and since I could

³ — *have a quick eye to see;*] Thus the eldest quarto. The folio reads,

— *if thou hast eyes to see,* STEEVENS.

⁴ *And bring them after—*] Thus the folio. The quarto, 1622, reads—*and bring her after.* MALONE.

⁵ — *best advantage.*] Fairest opportunity. JOHNSON.

⁶ *I have look'd upon the world for four times seven years:]* From this passage Iago's age seems to be ascertained; and it corresponds with the account in the novel on which *Othello* is founded, where he is described as a *young*, handsome man. The French translator of Shakspeare is however of opinion, that Iago here only speaks of

distinguish a benefit and an injury, I never found a man that knew how to love himself. Ere I would say, I would drown myself for the love of a Guinea-hen,⁷ I would change my humanity with a baboon.

ROD. What should I do? I confess, it is my shame to be so fond; but it is not in virtue to amend it.

IAGO. Virtue? a fig! 'tis in ourselves, that we are thus, or thus. Our bodies are our gardens; to the which, our wills are gardeners: so that if we will plant nettles, or sow lettuce; set hyssop, and weed up thyme; supply it with one gender of herbs, or distract it with many; either to have it steril with idleness,⁸ or manured with industry; why, the

those years of his life in which he had looked on the world with an eye of observation. But it would be difficult to assign a reason why he should mention the precise term of *twenty-eight years*; or to account for his knowing so accurately when his understanding arrived at maturity, and the operation of his sagacity, and his observations on mankind, commenced.

That Iago meant to say he was but twenty-eight years old, is clearly ascertained, by his marking particularly, though indefinitely, a period *within that time*, [*"and since I could distinguish," &c.*] when he began to make observations on the characters of men.

Waller on a picture which was painted for him in his youth, by Cornelius Jansen, and which is now in the possession of his heir, has expressed the same thought: "*Anno ætatis 23; vitæ vix primæ.*"

MALONE.

⁷ — *a Guinea hen,*] A showy bird with fine feathers.

JOHNSON.

A *Guinea-hen* was anciently the cant term for a prostitute. So, in *Albertus Wallenstein*, 1640:

" — Yonder's the cock o'the game,

" About to tread yon *Guinea-hen*; they're billing."

STEEVENS.

⁸ — *either to have it steril with idleness,*] Thus the authentic copies. The modern editors following the second folio, have omitted the word *to*.—I have frequently had occasion to remark that Shakspeare often begins a sentence in one way, and ends it in a different kind of construction. Here he has made Iago say, if we

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 445

power and corrigible authority of this lies in our wills. If the balance⁹ of our lives had not one scale of reason to poise another of sensuality, the blood and baseness of our natures would conduct us to most preposterous conclusions: But we have reason, to cool our raging motions, our carnal stings, our unbitted lusts;² whereof I take this, that you call—love, to be a sect, or scion.³

ROD. It cannot be.

IAGO. It is merely a lust of the blood, and a permission of the will. Come, be a man: Drown thyself? drown cats, and blind puppies. I have profess'd me thy friend, and I confess me knit to thy deserving with cables of perdurable toughness;⁴ I could never better stead thee than now. Put money in thy purse; follow these wars; defeat thy favour

will plant, &c. and he concludes, as if he had written—if *our will is*—either to have it, &c. See p. 416, n. 9. MALONE.

See Vol. III. p. 13, n. 2, where the remark on which the foregoing note is founded was originally made. STEEVENS.

⁹ *If the balance &c.*] The folio reads—If the *brain*. Probably, a mistake for—*beam*. STEEVENS.

² ——— *reason, to cool—our carnal stings, our unbitted lusts;*] So, in *A Knack to know an Honest Man*, 1596:

“ ——— Virtue never taught thee that;

“ She sets a *bit* upon her *bridled lusts*.”

See also *As you like it*, Act II. sc. vi:

“ For thou thyself hast been a libertine;

“ As sensual as the *brutiſh ſting* itself.” MALONE.

³ ——— *a sect, or scion.*] Thus the folio and quarto. A *sect* is what the more modern gardeners call a *cutting*. The modern editors read—a *set*. STEEVENS.

⁴ ——— *I confess me knit to thy deserving with cables of perdurable toughness;*] So, in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

“ To make you brothers, and to *knit* your hearts

“ With an *unslipping knot*.”

Again, in our author's 26th Sonnet:

“ Lord of my love, to whom in vassalage

“ Thy *merit* hath my duty strongly *knit*.” MALONE.

with an usurped beard; ⁵ I say, put money in thy purse. It cannot be, that Desdemona should long continue her love to the Moor,—put money in thy purse;—nor he his to her: it was a violent commencement, and thou shalt see an answerable sequestration; ⁶—put but money in thy purse.—These

⁵ ——— defeat thy favour with an usurped beard;] To defeat, is to undo, to change. JOHNSON.

Defeat is from *defaire*, Fr. to undo. Of the use of this word I have already given several instances. STEVENS.

Favour here means that combination of features which gives the face its distinguishing character. *Defeat*, from *defaire*, in French, signifies to unmake, decompose, or give a different appearance to, either by taking away something, or adding. Thus, in *Don Quixote*, Cardenio defeated his favour by cutting off his beard, and the Barber his, by putting one on. The beard which Mr. Ashton usurped when he escaped from the Tower, gave so different an appearance to his face, that he passed through his guards without the least suspicion. In *The Winter's Tale*, Autolycus had recourse to an expedient like Cardenio's, (as appears from the pocketing up his pedlar's excrement,) to prevent his being known in the garb of the prince. HENLEY.

To defeat, Minshew in his Dictionary, 1617, explains by the words—"to abrogate, to undo." See also Florio's Italian Dict. 1598: "*Disfacere*. To undoe, to marre, to unmake, to defeat."

MALONE.

⁶ ——— it was a violent commencement, and thou shalt see an answerable sequestration;] There seems to be an opposition of terms here intended, which has been lost in transcription. We may read, it was a violent conjunction, and thou shalt see an answerable sequestration; or, what seems to me preferable, it was a violent commencement, and thou shalt see an answerable sequel.

JOHNSON.

I believe the poet uses *sequestration* for *sequel*. He might conclude that it was immediately derived from *sequor*. *Sequestration*, however, may mean no more than *separation*. So, in this play—"a sequester from liberty." STEVENS.

Surely *sequestration* was used in the sense of *separation* only, or in modern language, *parting*. Their passion began with violence, and it shall end as quickly, of which a *separation* will be the consequence. A total and voluntary *sequestration* necessarily includes the cessation or end of affection.—We have the same thought in several other places. So, in *Romeo and Juliet*:

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Moors are changeable in their wills ;—fill thy purse with money : the food that to him now is as luscious as locusts, shall be to him shortly as bitter as coloquintida.' She must change for youth : when she is sated with his body, she will find the error of her choice.—She must have change, she must : therefore put money in thy purse.—If thou wilt needs damn thyself, do it a more delicate way than drown—

“ These *violent delights*, have *violent ends*,

“ And in their triumph die.”

Again, in *The Rape of Lucretia* :

“ Thy violent vanities can never last.”

I have here followed the first quarto. The folio reads—it was ‘a violent commencement *in her*, &c. The context shews that the original is the true reading. Othello's love for Desdemona has been just mentioned, as well as her's for the Moor. MALONE.

1 ———as *luscious as locusts*,——as bitter as *coloquintida*.] The old quarto reads—as *acerb* as *coloquintida*.

At *Tonquin* the insect *locusts* are considered as a great delicacy, not only by the poor but by the rich ; and are sold in the markets, as larks and quails are in Europe. It may be added, that the Levitical law permits four sorts of them to be eaten. STEEVENS.

It appears from *Dillon's Voyage to the East-Indies*, 1698, that “ the Negroes eat them, to revenge themselves, as they say, upon their carcases, for the evils they make them endure ; and I, (adds the writer,) have seen some French eat them, with as good an appetite as the Blacks, who all affirm, that they are of a *very good taste*.” RITSON.

An anonymous correspondent informs me, that the fruit of the locust-tree, (which, I believe, is here meant,) is a long black pod, that contains the seeds, among which there is a very sweet luscious juice of much the same consistency as fresh honey. This (says he) I have often tasted. STEEVENS.

That viscous substance which the pod of the locust contains, is, perhaps, of all others, the most *luscious*. From its likeness to honey, in consistency and flavour, the *locust* is called the *honey-tree* also. Its seeds, enclosed in a long pod, lie buried in the juice.

HENLEY.

Mr. Daines Barrington suggests to me, that Shakspeare perhaps had the third chapter of St. Matthew's gospel in his thoughts, in which we are told that John the Baptist lived in the wilderness on *locusts* and wild *honey*. MALONE.

ing. Make all the money thou canst: If sanctimony and a frail vow, betwixt an erring barbarian⁸ and a supersubtle Venetian, be not too hard for my wits, and all the tribe of hell, thou shalt enjoy her; therefore make money. A pox of drowning thyself! it is clean out of the way: seek thou rather to be hang'd in compassing thy joy, than to be drown'd and go without her.

ROD. Wilt thou be fast to my hopes, if I depend on the issue?⁹

IAGO. Thou art sure of me;—Go, make money:

⁸ ——— *betwixt an erring barbarian* —] We should read *errand*; that is, a vagabond, one that has no house nor country.

WARBURTON

Sir T. Hanmer reads, *arrant*. *Erring* is as well as either.

JOHNSON

So, in *Hamlet*:

“Th’ extravagant and *erring* spirit hies

“To his confine.” STEEVENS.

An *erring Barbarian* perhaps means a rover from *Barbary*. He had before said, “You’ll have your daughter cover’d with a *Barbary* horse.” MALONE.

I rather conceive *barbarian* to be here used with its primitive sense of—a *foreigner*, as it is also in *Coriolanus*:

“I would they were *barbarians*, (as they are,)

“Though in Rome litter’d.” STEEVENS.

The word *erring* is sufficiently explained by a passage in the first scene of the play, where Roderigo tells Brabantio that his daughter was

“Tying her duty, beauty, wit and fortune,

“To an extravagant and wheeling stranger.”

Erring is the same as *erraticus* in Latin.

The word *erring* is used in the same sense in some of Orlando’s verses in *As you like it*:

“Tongues I’ll hang on every tree,

“That shall civil sayings shew.

“Some, how brief the life of man

“Runs his *erring* pilgrimage;—” M. MASON.

⁹ ——— *if I depend on the issue?*] These words are wanting in the first quarto. STEEVENS.

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—I have told thee often, and I re-tell thee again and again, I hate the Moor: My cause is hearted;² thine hath no less reason: Let us be conjunctive³ in our revenge against him: if thou canst cuckold him, thou dost thyself a pleasure, and me a sport. There are many events in the womb of time, which will be delivered. Traverse;⁴ go; provide thy money. We will have more of this to-morrow. Adieu.

ROD. Where shall we meet i'the morning?

IAGO. At my lodging.

ROD. I'll be with thee betimes.

IAGO. Go to; farewell. Do you hear, Roderigo?⁵

ROD. What say you?

IAGO. No more of drowning, do you hear.

² — *hearted*;] This adjective occurs again in Act III: “ — *hearted* throne.” Dr. Johnson in his Dictionary has unguardedly said, that it is only used in composition: as, for instance, *hard-hearted*. STEEVENS.

³ — *conjunctive* —] The first quarto reads, *communicative*. STEEVENS.

⁴ *Traverse*;] This was an ancient military word of command. So, in *King Henry IV.* P. II. Bardolph says: “ Hold, Wart, *traverse*; thus, thus, thus.” STEEVENS.

⁵ — *Do you hear, Roderigo?*] In the folio, instead of this and the following speeches, we find only these words:

Iago. Go to; farewell. Do you hear, Roderigo?

Rod. I'll sell all my land.

[*Exit.*

Iago. Thus do I ever, &c.

The quarto, 1622, reads:

Iago. Go to; farewell:—do you hear, Roderigo?

Rod. What say you?

Iago. No more of drowning, do you hear.

Rod. I am chang'd.

[*Exit Rod.*

Iago. Go to; farewell: put money enough in your purse.

Thus do I ever, &c.

The reading of the text is formed out of the two copies.

MALONE.

ROD. I am changed. I'll sell all my land.

IAGO. Go to; farewell: put money enough in your purse. [Exit RODERIGO.

Thus do I ever make my fool my purse:
For I mine own gain'd knowledge should profane,
If I would time expend with such a snipe,⁶
But for my sport and profit. I hate the Moor;
And it is thought abroad, that 'twixt my sheets
He has done my office: I know not, if't be true;
But I, for mere suspicion in that kind,
Will do, as if for surety.⁷ He holds me well;⁸
The better shall my purpose work on him.
Cassio's a proper man: Let me see now;
To get his place, and to plume up my will;⁹
A double knavery,—How? how?—Let me see:—
After some time, to abuse Othello's ear,
That he is too familiar with his wife:—
He hath a person, and a smooth dispose,
To be suspected; fram'd to make women false.
The Moor is of a free and open nature,¹⁰
That thinks men honest, that but seem to be so;
And will as tenderly be led by the nose,
As asses are.

⁶ — a snipe,] *Woodcock* is the term generally used by Shakespeare to denote an insignificant fellow; but Iago is more sarcastic, and compares his dupe to a smaller and meaner bird of almost the same shape. STEEVENS.

⁷ — as if for surety.] That is, "I will act as if I were certain of the fact." M. MASON.

⁸ — He holds me well;] i. e. esteems me. So, in *St. Matt. xxi. 26*: "— all hold John as a prophet."

Again, in *Hamlet*:

"Hold it a fashion, and a toy in blood." REED.

⁹ — to plume up &c.] The first quarto reads—to make up &c. STEEVENS,

¹⁰ The Moor is of a free and open nature,] The first quarto reads, The Moor, a free and open nature too, That thinks &c. STEEVENS.

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I have't;—it is engender'd:—Hell and night
Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light.
[Exit.]

ACT II. SCENE I.

*A Sea-port Town in Cyprus.*³ *A Platform.*

Enter MONTANO and two Gentlemen.

MON. What from the cape can you discern at sea?

1. GENT. Nothing at all: it is a high-wrought flood;

³ ——— *in Cyprus.*] All the modern editors, following Mr. Rowe, have supposed the capital of Cyprus to be the place where the scene of *Othello* lies during four acts: but this could not have been Shakespeare's intention; NICOSIA, the capital city of Cyprus, being situated nearly in the center of the island, and thirty miles distant from the sea. The principal sea-port town of Cyprus was FAMAGUSTA; where there was formerly a strong fort and commodious haven, the only one of any magnitude in the island; and there undoubtedly the scene should be placed. "Neere unto the haven (says Knolles,) standeth an old CASTLE, with four towers after the ancient manner of building." To this castle, we find Othello presently repairs.

It is observable that Cinthio in the novel on which this play is founded, which was first published in 1565, makes no mention of any attack being made on Cyprus by the Turks. From our poet's having mentioned the preparations against this island, which they first assaulted and took from the Venetians in 1570, we may suppose that he intended that year as the era of his tragedy; but by mentioning *Rhodes* as also likely to be assaulted by the Turks, he has fallen into an historical inconsistency; for they were then in quiet possession of that island, of which they became masters in December, 1522; and if, to evade this difficulty, we refer *Othello* to an era prior to that year, there will be an equal incongruity; for from 1473, when the Venetians first became possessed of Cyprus, to 1522, they had not been molested by any Turkish armament. MALONE.

I cannot, 'twixt the heaven³ and the main,
Descry a sail.

MON. Methinks, the wind hath spoke aloud at
land;
A fuller blast ne'er shook our battlements:
If it hath ruffian'd so upon the sea,⁴
What ribs of oak, when mountains melt on them,⁵

³ ——— 'twixt the heaven —] Thus the folio; but perhaps our author wrote—the heavens. The quarto, 1622, probably by a printer's error, has—*haven*. STEEVENS.

The reading of the folio affords a bolder image; but the article prefixed strongly supports the original copy; for applied to *haven*, it is extremely awkward. Besides; though in *The Winter's Tale* our poet has made a Clown talk of a *ship boring the moon with her mainmast*, and say that "*between the sea and the firmament you cannot thrust a bodkin's point*," is it probable, that he should put the same hyperbolical language into the mouth of a gentleman, answering a serious question on an important occasion? In a subsequent passage indeed he indulges himself without impropriety in the elevated diction of poetry.

Of the *haven* of Famagusta, which was defended from the *main* by two great rocks, at the distance of forty paces from each other, Shakspeare might have found a particular account in Knolles's *History of the Turks*, ad ann. 1570, p. 863. MALONE.

⁴ *If it hath ruffian'd so upon the sea,*] So, in *Troilus and Cressida*:

"But let the *ruffian* Boreas once enrage

"The gentle *Thetis*,—." MALONE.

⁵ ——— *when mountains melt on them,*] Thus the folio. The quarto reads:

"——— *when the huge mountain melts.*"

This latter reading might be countenanced by the following passage in the Second Part of *King Henry IV*:

"——— the continent

"Weary of solid firmness, *melt* itself

"Into the sea ——" STEEVENS.

The quarto is surely the better reading; it conveys a more natural image, more poetically expressed. Every man who has been on board a vessel in the Bay of Biscay, or in any very high sea, must know that the vast billows seem to melt away from the ship, not on it. M. MASON.

I would not wilfully differ from Mr. M. Mason concerning the

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Can hold the mortife? what shall we hear of this?

2. *GENY*. A segregation of the Turkish fleet:
For do but stand upon the foaming shore,⁶
The chiding billow seems to pelt the clouds;
The wind-shak'd surge, with high and monstrous
main,
Seems to cast water on the burning bear,
And quench the guards of the ever-fixed pole:⁷

value of these readings; yet surely the *mortife* of a ship is in greater peril when the watry mountain melts *upon* it, than when it melts *from* it. When the waves retreat from a vessel, it is safe. When they break over it, its structure is endangered. So, in *Pericles*, *Prince of Tyre*:

“ ————— a sea
“ That almost burst the deck.” STEEVENS.

The quarto, 1622, reads—when the huge mountaine *melts*; the letter *s*, which perhaps belongs to *mountain*, having wandered at the press from its place.

I apprehend, that in the quarto reading (as well as in the folio,) by *mountains* the poet meant not land-mountains, which Mr. Steevens seems by his quotation to have thought, but those huge *furges*, (resembling mountains in their magnitude,) which “with high and monstrous main seem’d to cast water on the burning bear.”

So, in a subsequent scene:

“ And let the labouring bark climb *bills* of seas,
“ *Olympus* high,——.”

Again, in *Troilus and Cressida*:

“ ——— and anon behold
“ The strong-ribb’d bark through *liquid mountains* cuts.”

MALONE.

My remark on Mr. Mason’s preceding note will show that I had no such meaning as Mr. Malone has imputed to me. All I aimed at was to parallel the idea in the quarto, of *one* mountain melting, instead of many. STEEVENS.

⁶ ——— *the foaming shore*,] The elder quarto reads—*banning shore*, which offers the bolder image; i. e. the shore that execrates the ravage of the waves. So, in *King Henry VI.* P. I:

“ Fell, *banning* hag, enchantress, hold thy tongue.”

STEEVENS.

⁷ *And quench the guards of the ever-fixed pole:*] Alluding to the star *Arctophylax*. JOHNSON.

The elder quarto reads—*ever-fired* pole. STEEVENS.

I never did like molestation view
On th' enchas'd flood.

MON. If that the Turkish fleet
Be not inselter'd and embay'd, they are drown'd;
It is impossible they bear it out.

Enter a third Gentleman.

3. *GENT.* News, lords! our wars are done;
The desperate tempest hath so bang'd the Turks,
That their designment halts: A noble ship of Ve-
nice

Hath seen a grievous wreck and sufferance
On most part of their fleet.

MON. How! is this true?

3. *GENT.* The ship is here put in,
A Veronesé; Michael Cassio,^s

^s *The ship is here put in,*

A Veronesé; Michael Cassio, &c.] [Old copies—*Veronessa*.] Mr. Heath is of opinion, that the poet intended to inform us, that Othello's lieutenant Cassio was of Verona, an inland city of the Venetian state; and adds, that the editors have not been pleased to say what kind of ship is here denoted by a *Veronessa*. By a *Veronessa*, or *Veronesé*, (for the Italian pronunciation must be retained, otherwise the measure will be defective,) a ship of Verona is denoted; as we say to this day of ships in the river, such a one is a *Dutchman*, a *Jamaica-man*, &c. I subjoin Mr. Warton's note, as a confirmation of my own. STEEVENS.

The true reading is *Veronesé*, pronounced as a quadrisyllable:

— The ship is here put in,

A Veronesé.—

It was common to introduce *Italian* words, and in their proper pronunciation then familiar. So Spenser in *The Faery Queen*, B. III. c. xi l. 10:

“ With sleeves dependant *Albanesé* wife.”

Mr. Heath observes, that “ the editors have not been pleased to inform us what kind of ship is here denoted by the name of a *Veronessa*.” But even supposing that *Veronessa* is the true reading, there is no sort of difficulty. He might just as well have inquired, what

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Lieutenant to the warlike Moor, Othello,
Is come on shore: the Moor himself's at sea,
And is in full commission here for Cyprus.

MON. I am glad on't; 'tis a worthy governor.

3. *GENT.* But this same Cassio,—though he speak
of comfort,
Touching the Turkish loss,—yet he looks sadly,
And prays the Moor be safe; for they were parted
With foul and violent tempest.

MON. 'Pray heaven he be;
For I have serv'd him, and the man commands

kind of a ship is a *Hamburgber*. This is exactly a parallel form. For it is not the species of the ship which is implied in this appellation. Our critick adds, "the poet had not a ship in his thoughts.—He intended to inform us, that Othello's lieutenant, Cassio, was of *Verona*. We should certainly read:

— The ship is here put in.

A Veronese, Michael Cassio, (&c.)

Is come on shore." —

This regulation of the lines is ingenious. But I agree with Sir T. Hanmer, and I think it appears from many parts of the play, that Cassio was a Florentine. In this speech, the *third gentleman*, who brings the news of the wreck of the Turkish fleet, returns his tale, and relates the circumstances more distinctly. In his *former* speech he says, "*A noble ship of Venice* saw the distress of the Turks." And here he adds, "The very ship is just now put into our port, and she is a *Veronesè*." That is, a ship fitted out or furnished by the people of Verona, a city of the Venetian state. T. WARTON.

I believe we are all wrong. *Verona* is an inland city. Every inconsistency may, however, be avoided, if we read—*The Veroneffa*, i. e. the name of the ship is the *Veroneffa*. Verona, however, might be obliged to furnish ships towards the general defence of Italy.

STEEVENS.

The emendation proposed by Mr. Steevens is acute; but Shakespeare's acquaintance with the topography of Italy (as appears from *The Tempest*) was very imperfect. HENLEY.

In Thomas's *History of Italy*, already quoted, the people of Verona are called the *Veronesi*.

This ship has been already described as a ship of Venice. It is

Like a full soldier.⁸ Let's to the sea-side, ho!
 As well to see the vessel that's come in,
 As to throw out our eyes for brave Othello;
 Even till we make the main,⁹ and the aerial blue,
 An indistinct regard.

GENT. Come, let's do so;
 For every minute is expectancy
 Of more arrivance.

Enter CASSIO.

CAS. Thanks to the valiant of this warlike isle,¹
 That so approve the Moor; O, let the heavens
 Give him defence against the elements,
 For I have lost him on a dangerous sea!

MON. Is he well shipp'd?

CAS. His bark is stoutly timber'd, and his
 pilot
 Of very expert and approv'd allowance;³

now called "a *Veronesé*;" that is, a ship belonging to and furnished by the inland city of Verona, for the use of the Venetian state; and newly arrived from Venice. "Besides many other towns, (says Contareno,) castles, and villages, they [the Venetians,] possess seven faire cities; as Trevigi, Padoua, Vicenza, *Verona*, Brescia, Bergamo, and Crema." *Commonwealth of Venice*, 1599. MALONE.

⁸ *Like a full soldier.*] Like a complete soldier. So before, p. 387:
 "What a full fortune doth the thick-lips owe." MALONE.

⁹ *Even till we make the main, &c.*] This line and half is wanting in the eldest quarto. STEEVENS.

² — warlike *isle*,] Thus the folio. The first quarto reads—worthy isle. STEEVENS.

³ *Of very expert and approv'd allowance;*] I read,
Very expert, and of approv'd allowance. JOHNSON.

Expert and approv'd allowance is put for *allow'd and approv'd expertness*. This mode of expression is not unfrequent in Shakspeare.
 STEEVENS.

Therefore my hopes, not surfeited to death,
Stand in bold cure.⁴

[WITHIN.] A fail, a fail, a fail!

⁴ *Therefore my hopes, not surfeited to death,
Stand in bold cure.*] I do not understand these lines. I know not how *hope* can be *surfeited to death*, that is, *can be increased, till it be destroyed*; nor what it is to *stand in bold cure*; or why *hope* should be considered as a disease. In the copies there is no variation, Shall we read:

Therefore my *fears*, not *surfeited to death*,
Stand in bold cure?

This is better, but it is not well. Shall we strike a bolder stroke, and read thus?

Therefore my hopes, not *surfeited to death*,
Stand *bold, not sure.* JOHNSON.

Presumptuous hopes, which have no foundation in probability, may poetically be said to surfeit themselves to death, or forward their own dissolution. To *stand in bold cure*, is to erect themselves in confidence of being fulfilled. A parallel expression occurs in *King Lear*, Act III. sc. vi:

"This rest might yet have balm'd his broken senses,

"Which, if conveniency will not allow,

"*Stand in hard cure.*"

Again:

— his life, with thine, &c,

Stand in assured loss.

In bold cure means, in confidence of being cured. STEEVENS.

Dr. Johnson says, "he knows not why *hope* should be considered as a disease." But it is not *hope* which is here described as a disease; those misgiving apprehensions which diminish hope, are in fact the disease, and hope itself is the patient.

A surfeit being a disease arising from an *excessive* overcharge of the stomach, the poet with his usual licence uses it for any species of *excess*.—Therefore, says Cassio, my hopes, which, though faint and sickly with apprehension, are not totally destroyed by an excess of despondency, erect themselves with some degree of confidence that they will be relieved, by the safe arrival of Othello, from those ill-divining fears under which they now languish.

The word *surfeit* having occurred to Shakspeare, led him to consider such a hope as Cassio entertained, not a sanguine, but a faint and languid hope, ("sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,") as a *disease*, and to talk of its *cure*.

Enter another Gentleman. °

CAS. What noise?

4. GENT. The town is empty; on the brow o'the
sea

Stand ranks of people, and they cry—a fail.

CAS. My hopes do shape him for the governour.

2. GENT. They do discharge their shot of cour-
tesy; [Guns heard.

Our friends, at least.

CAS. I pray you, sir, go forth,
And give us truth who 'tis that is arriv'd.

2. GENT. I shall. [Exit.

MON. But, good lieutenant, is your general wiv'd?

CAS. Most fortunately: he hath achiev'd a maid
That paragon's description, and wild fame;
One that excels the quirks of blazoning pens,⁵
And in the essential vesture of creation,
Does bear all excellency.⁶—How now? who has
put in?

A passage in *Twelfth-Night*, where a similar phraseology is used,
may serve to strengthen this interpretation:

“ Give me *excess* of it; that, *surfeiting*,

“ The appetite may *sicken*, and so die.”

Again, in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*:

“ O, I have fed upon this *woe* already,

“ And now *excess* of it will make me *surfeit*.” MALONE.

I believe that Solomon, upon this occasion, will be found the
best interpreter: “ *Hope deferred maketh the heart sick.*” HENLEY.

⁵ One that excels the quirks of blazoning pens,] So, in our poet's
103d Sonnet:

“ ——— a face

“ That over-goes my blunt invention quite,

“ Dulling my lines, and doing me disgrace.” MALONE.

⁶ And in the essential vesture of creation,

Does bear all excellency.] The author seems to use *essential*, for

* *Re-enter second Gentleman.*

2. *GENY.* 'Tis one Iago, ancient to the general.

existent, real. She excels the praises of invention, says he, and in *real* qualities, with which *creation* has *invested* her, *bears all excellency.* JOHNSON.

Does bear all excellency.] Such is the reading of the quartos; for which the folio has this:

And in the essential vesture of creation

Do's tyre the ingeniuer.

Which I explain thus,

Does tire the ingenious verse.

This is the best reading, and that which the author substituted in his revival. JOHNSON.

The reading of the quarto is so flat and unpoetical, when compared with that sense which seems meant to have been given in the folio, that I heartily wish some emendation could be hit on, which might entitle it to a place in the text. I believe the word *tire* was not introduced to signify—to *fatigue*, but to *attire*, to *dress*. The verb *to attire*, is often so abbreviated. Thus, in *Holland's Leaguer*, 1633:

" ——— Cupid's a boy,

" And would you *tire* him like a senator?"

Again, in the *Comedy of Errors*, Act II. sc. ii:

" ——— To save the money he spends in *tiring*," &c.

The essential vesture of creation tempts me to believe it was so used on the present occasion. I would read something like this:

And in the essential vesture of creation

Does tire the ingenuous virtue.

i. e. invests her artless virtue in the fairest form of earthly substance.

In *The Merchant of Venice*, Act V. Lorenzo calls the body—"the muddy *vesture* of decay."

It may, however, be observed, that the word *ingenier* did not anciently signify *one who manages the engines or artillery of an army*, but any *ingenious person*, any *master of liberal science*.

So, in Ben Jonson's *Sejanus*, Act I. sc. i:

" No, Silius, we are no good *ingeners*,

" We want the fine arts," &c.

Ingener, therefore may be the true reading of this passage: and a similar thought occurs in *The Tempest*, Act IV. sc. i:

" For thou shalt find she will outstrip all praise,

" And make it *halt* behind her."

Cas. He has had most favourable and happy speed:

In the argument of *Sejanus*, B. Jonson likewise says, that his hero "worketh with all his *ingene*," apparently from the Latin *ingenium*.

STEEVENS.

Perhaps the words intended in the folio, were,

Does tire the ingene ever.

Ingene is used for *ingenium* by Puttenham, in his *Arte of Poesie*, 1589: "—such also as made most of their workes by translation out of the Latin and French tongue, and few or none of their owne *engine*." *Engine* is here without doubt a misprint for *ingene*.—I believe, however, the reading of the quarto is the true one.—If *tire* was used in the sense of *weary*, then *ingener* must have been used for the ingenious person who should attempt to enumerate the merits of Desdemona. To the instance produced by Mr. Steevens from *Sejanus*, may be added another in Fleckno's *Discourse of the English Stage*, 1664: "Of this curious art the Italians (this latter age) are the greatest masters, the French good proficient, and we in England only schollars and learners, yet, having proceeded no further than to bare painting, and not arrived to the stupendous wonders of your great *ingeniers*." In one of Daniel's Sonnets, we meet with a similar imagery to that in the first of these lines:

"Though time doth spoil her of the fairest vaile

"That ever yet mortalitie did cover." MALONE.

The reading of the folio, though incorrectly spelled, appears to have been,

Does tire the engineer;

which is preferable to either of the proposed amendments; and the meaning of the passage would then be, "One whose real perfections were so excellent, that to blazon them would exceed the abilities of the ablest masters."

The sense attributed to the word *tire*, according to this reading, is perfectly agreeable to the language of poetry. Thus Dryden says:

"For this an hundred voices I desire,

"To tell thee what an hundred tongues would *tire*;

"Yet never could be worthily exprest,

"How deeply those are seated in my breast."

And in the last act of *The Winter's Tale*, the third Gentleman says, "I never heard of such another encounter, which *lames* report to follow it, and *undoes* description to do it." The objection to the reading of *inginer*, is, that although we find the words *ingine*, *inginer*, and *inginous* in Jonson, they are not the language of Shak-

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Tempests themselves, high seas, and howling winds,
The gutter'd rocks, and congregated sands,—
Traitors ensteep'd¹ to clog the guiltless keel,

peare; and I believe indeed that Jonson is singular in the use of them. M. MASON.

Whoever shall reject uncommon expressions in the writings of Shakspeare, because they differ either from the exact rules of orthography, or from the unsettled mode of spelling them by other writers, will be found to deprive him no less of his beauties, than that the ornithologist would the peacock, who should cut out every eye of his train because it was either not circular, or else varied from some imaginary standard.—*Ingenieur* is no doubt of the same import with *ingenier* or *ingeneer*, though perhaps differently written by Shakspeare in reference to *ingenious*, and to distinguish it from *ingeneer*, which he has elsewhere used in a military sense. Mr. M. Mason's objection, that it is not the language of Shakspeare, is more than begging the question; and to affirm that Jonson is singular in the use of *ingine*, *inginer*, and *inginous*, is as little to the purpose. For we not only have those expressions in other writers, but others from the same root, as *ingene*, *engene*, &c. in Holinshed, and Sir T. Moore; and Daniel uses *ingeniate*:

“Th' adulterate beauty of a fals'd cheek

“Did Nature (for this good) *ingeniate*,

“To shew in thee the glory of her best.” HENLEY.

¹ *Traitors ensteep'd*—] Thus the folio and one of the quartos. The first copy reads—*en:scerp'd*, of which every reader may make what he pleases. Perhaps *en:scerp'd* was an old English word borrowed from the French *escarpé*, which Shakspeare not finding congruous to the image of clogging the keel, afterwards changed.

I once thought that the poet had written—*Traitors en:scarf'd*, i. e. muffled in their robes, as in *Julius Cæsar*. So, in *Hamlet*: “My sea-gown *scarf'd* about me;” and this agrees better with the idea of a traitor: yet whatever is gained one way is lost another. Our poet too often adopts circumstances from every image that arose in his mind, and employing them without attention to the propriety of their union, his metaphorical expressions become inextricably confused. STEEVENS.

Mr. Steevens's difficulty respecting *ensteep'd*, would, perhaps, have been removed, if he had but recollected the passage of the fourth act, where Othello alludes to the fate of Tantalus:

“Had it pleas'd heaven

“To try me with affliction; had he rain'd

As having sense of beauty, do omit
Their mortal natures,⁸ letting go safely by
The divine Desdemona.

MON.

What is she?

CAS. She that I spake of, our great captain's
captain,

Left in the conduct of the bold Iago;
Whose footing here anticipates our thoughts,
A se'nnight's speed.—Great Jove,⁹ Othello guard,
And swell his sail with thine own powerful breath,
That he may bless this bay with his tall ship,
Make love's quick pants in Desdemona's arms,¹
Give renew'd fire to our extincted spirits,
And bring all Cyprus comfort!²—O, behold,

*Enter DESDEMONA, EMILIA, IAGO, RODERIGO,
and Attendants.*

The riches of the ship is come on shore!
Ye men of Cyprus, let her have your knees:—
Hail to thee, lady! and the grace of heaven,
Before, behind thee, and on every hand,
Enwheel thee round!

“ All kind of foreshadowings and shames on my bare head;

“ *Steep'd me in poverty to the very lips—*.” HENLEY.

⁸ *Their mortal natures,*] i. e. their deadly, destructive natures.
So, in *Macbeth*:

“ That tend on mortal thought.”

See Dr. Johnson's note, Vol. VII. p. 374, n. 8. REED.

⁹ — *Great Jove, &c.*] For this absurdity I have not the smallest
doubt that the Master of the Revels, and not our poet, is answerable.
See *The Historical Account of the English Stage*, Vol. II. MALONE.

² *Make love's quick pants in Desdemona's arms,*] Thus the folio.
The quarto with less animation:

And swiftly come to *Desdemona's arms*. STEEVENS.

³ *And bring all Cyprus comfort!*] This passage is only found in
the quartos. STEEVENS.

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Des. I thank you, valiant Cassio.
What tidings can you tell me of my lord?

Cas. He is not yet arriv'd; nor know I aught
But that he's well, and will be shortly here.

Des. O, but I fear;—How lost you company?

Cas. The great contention of the sea and skies
Parted our fellowship: But, hark! a sail.

[*Cry within.* A sail, a sail! *Then guns heard.*

2. *Genr.* They give their greeting to the citadel;
This likewise is a friend.

Cas. See for the news.⁴—

[*Exit Gentleman.*

Good ancient, you are welcome;—Welcome, mis-
trefs:— [To *EMILIA.*

Let it not gall your patience, good Iago,
That I extend my manners; 'tis my breeding
That gives me this bold shew of courtesy.

[*Kissing her.*

IAGO. Sir, would she give you so much of her lips,
As of her tongue she oft bestows on me,
You'd have enough.

Des. Alas, she has no speech.

IAGO. In faith, too much;⁵
I find it still, when I have list to sleep:
Marry, before your ladyship, I grant,
She puts her tongue a little in her heart,
And chides with thinking.

EMIL. You have little cause to say so.

IAGO. Come on, come on; you are pictures out
of doors,

⁴ See for the news.] The first quarto reads—*So speaks this voice.*

STEEVENS.

⁵ In faith, too much;] Thus the folio. The first quarto thus:

I know too much;

I find it, *I*; for *when*, &c. STEEVENS.

Bells in your parlours, wild cats in your kitchens,
 Saints in your injuries,⁶ devils being offended,
 Players in your housewifery, and housewives in your
 beds.

DES. O, fie upon thee, slanderer !⁷

IAGO. Nay, it is true, or else I am a Turk ;
 You rise to play, and go to bed to work.

EMIL. You shall not write my praise.

IAGO. No, let me not.

DES. What would'st thou write of me, if thou
 should'st praise me ?

IAGO. O gentle lady, do not put me to't ;
 For I am nothing, if not critical.⁸

⁶ *Saints in your injuries, &c.*] When you have a mind to do injuries, you put on an air of sanctity. JOHNSON.

In Puttenham's *Art of Poesie*, 1589, I meet with almost the same thoughts : " We limit the comely parts of a woman to consist in four points ; that is, to be, a shrew in the kitchen, a saint in the church, an angel at board, and an ape in the bed ; as the chronicle reports by mistress Shore, paramour to King Edward the Fourth."

Again, in a play of Middleton's, called *Blurt Master Constant* ; or, *The Spaniard's Night-walk*, 1602 : " — according to that wise saying of you, you be saints in the church, angels in the street, devils in the kitchen, and apes in your beds."

Again, in *The Miseries of enforced Marriage*, 1607 : *Women are in churches saints, abroad angels, at home devils.*"

Puttenham, who mentions all other contemporary writers, has not once spoken of Shakspeare ; so that it is probable he had not produced any thing of so early a date.

The truth is, that this book appears to have been written several years before its publication. See p. 115, 116, where the author refers to Sir Nicholas Bacon, who died in 1579, and recounts a circumstance, from his own knowledge, that happened in 1553.

STEEVENS.

See also Meres's *Wit's Treasury*, p. 48. REED.

⁷ *O, fie upon thee, slanderer !*] This short speech is, in the quarto, unappropriated ; and may as well belong to *Emilia* as to *Desdemona*.

STEEVENS.

⁸ — critical.] That is, censorious. JOHNSON.

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DES. Come on, assay :—There's one gone to the harbour?

IAGO. Ay, madam.

DES. I am not merry; but I do beguile
The thing I am, by seeming otherwise.—
Come, how would'st thou praise me?

IAGO. I am about it; but, indeed, my invention
Comes from my pate, as birdlime does from frize,⁹
It plucks out brains and all: But my muse labours,
And thus she is deliver'd.

If she be fair and wise,—fairness, and wit,
The one's for use, the other useth it.

DES. Well prais'd! How if she be black and witty?

IAGO. If she be black, and thereto have a wit,
She'll find a white that shall her blackness fit.²

DES. Worse and worse.

EMIL. How, if fair and foolish?

IAGO. She never yet was foolish that was fair;³
For even her folly help'd her to an heir.

So, in our author's 122d Sonnet:

" — my adder's sense

" To critick and to flatterer stopped are." MALONE.

⁹ — my invention

[Comes from my pate, as birdlime does from frize.] A similar thought occurs in *The Puritan*: "The excuse stuck upon my tongue, like *ship-pitch* upon a *mariner's gown*." STEEVENS.

² — her blackness fit.] The first quarto reads—*bit*. So, in *King Lear*: "I pray you, let us *bit* together." I believe *bit*, in the present instance also, to be the true reading, though it will not bear, as in *Love's Labour's Lost*, explanation. STEEVENS.

³ She never yet was foolish &c.] We may read:

She ne'er was yet so foolish that was fair,

But even her folly help'd her to an heir.

Yet, I believe, the common reading to be right: the law makes the power of cohabitation a proof that a man is not a *natural*; therefore, since the foolishlest woman, if *pretty*, may have a child, no *pretty* woman is ever foolish. JOHNSON.

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H h

DES. These are old fond paradoxes, to make fools laugh i'the alehouse. What miserable praise hast thou for her that's foul and foolish?

IAGO. There's none so foul, and foolish thereunto, But does foul pranks which fair and wise ones do.

DES. O heavy ignorance!—thou praifest the worst best. But what praise could'st thou bestow on a deserving woman indeed?³ one, that, in the authority of her merit, did justly put on the vouch of very malice itself?⁴

IAGO. She that was ever fair, and never proud; Had tongue at will, and yet was never loud; Never lack'd gold, and yet went never gay; Fled from her wish, and yet said,—*now I may*; She that, being anger'd, her revenge being nigh, Bade her wrong stay, and her displeasure fly; She that in wisdom never was so frail, To change the cod's head for the salmon's tail;⁵

³ But what praise couldst thou bestow on a deserving woman indeed? The hint for this question, and the metrical reply of Iago, is taken from a strange pamphlet, called *Choice, Chance, and Change, or Conceits in their Colours*, 1606; when after Tidero has described many ridiculous characters in verse, *Arnosilo* asks him, "But, I pray thee, didst thou write none in commendation of some worthy creature?" Tidero then proceeds, like Iago, to repeat more verses.

STEEVENS.

⁴ — one, that, in the authority of her merit, did justly put on the vouch of very malice itself? The sense is this, one that was so conscious of her own merit, and of the authority her character had with every one, that she durst venture to call upon malice itself to vouch for her. This was some commendation. And the character only of clearest virtue; which could force malice, even against its nature, to do justice. WARBURTON.

To put on the vouch of malice, is to assume a character vouched by the testimony of malice itself. JOHNSON.

To put on is to provoke, to incite. So, in *Macbeth*:

" — the powers above

" Put on their instruments." STEEVENS.

She that could think, and ne'er disclose her mind,
See suitors following, and not look behind ;⁶
She was a wight,—if ever such wight were,—

DES. To do what ?

IAGO. To suckle fools, and chronicle small beer.⁷

DES. O most lame and impotent conclusion !—
Do not learn of him, Emilia, though he be thy
husband.—How say you, Cassio ? is he not a most
profane⁸ and liberal counsellor ?⁹

⁵ *To change the cod's head for the salmon's tail ;*] i. e. to exchange a delicacy for coarser fare. See *Queen Elizabeth's Household Book for the 43d year of her reign* : “ Item, the Master Cookes have to see all the *salmon's tails*” &c. p. 296. STEEVENS.

Surely the poet had a further allusion, which it is not necessary to explain. The word *frail* in the preceding line shews that *wiands* were not alone in his thoughts. MALONE.

A *frail* judgement, means only a *weak one*. I suspect no equiv-
oque. STEEVENS.

⁶ *See suitors following, and not look behind ;*] The first quarto omits this line. STEEVENS.

⁷ *To suckle fools, and chronicle small beer.*] After enumerating the perfections of a woman, Iago adds, that if ever there was such a one as he had been describing, she was, at the best, of no other use, than to suckle children, and keep the accounts of a household. The expressions to suckle fools, and chronicle small beer, are only instances of the want of natural affection, and the predominance of a critical censoriousness in Iago, which he allows himself to be possessed of, where he says, *O ! I am nothing, if not critical*. STEEVENS.

⁸ — *profane* —] Grofs of language, of expression broad and brutal. So Brabantio, in the first act, calls Iago *profane* wretch. JOHNSON.

Ben Jonson in describing the characters in *Every Man out of his Humour*, styles Carlo Buffone, a publick, scurrilous, and *profane* jester. STEEVENS.

⁹ — *liberal counsellor ?*] *Liberal* for *licentious*. WARBURTON.

So, in *The Fair Maid of Briflow*, 1605, bl. 1 :

“ But Vallenger, most like a *liberal* villain,

“ Did give her scandalous, ignoble terms.” STEEVENS.

Cas. He speaks home, madam; you may relish him more in the foldier, than in the scholar.

Iago. [*Aside.*] He takes her by the palm: Ay, well said, whisper: with as little a web as this, will I ensnare as great a fly as Cassio. Ay, smile upon her, do; I will gyve thee² in thine own courtship. You say true; 'tis so, indeed: if such tricks as these strip you out of your lieutenantry, it had been better you had not kifs'd your three fingers so oft, which now again you are most apt to play the fir in.³ Very good; well kifs'd! an excellent courtesy!⁴ 'tis so, indeed. Yet again your fingers to your lips? would, they were clyster-pipes for your sake!—[*Trumpet.*] The Moor,—I know his trumpet.

See p. 295, n. 4. MALONE.

Counsellor seems to mean, not so much a man that *gives counsel*, as one that discourses fearlessly and volubly. A talker. JOHNSON.

Counsellor is here used in the common acceptation. Desdemona refers to the answers she had received from Iago, and particularly her last. HENLEY.

² — *I will gyve thee* —] i. e. catch, shackle. POPE.

The first quarto reads—I will *catch* you in your own *courtesies*; the second quarto—I will *catch* you in your own courtship. The folio as it is in the text. STEEVENS.

³ — *to play the fir in.*] That is, to show your good breeding and gallantry. HENLEY.

⁴ — *well kifs'd! an excellent courtesy!*] Spoken when Cassio kisses his hand, and Desdemona courtesies. JOHNSON.

This reading was recovered from the quarto, 1622, by Dr. Johnson. The folio has—and excellent courtesy.

I do not believe that any part of these words relates to Desdemona. In the original copy, we have just seen, the poet wrote—"ay, smile upon her, do; I will catch you in your own *courtesies*." Here therefore he probably meant only to speak of Cassio, while kissing his hand. "Well kifs'd! an excellent courtesy!" i. e. an excellent salute. *Courtesy*, in the sense of an obeisance or salute, was in Shakspeare's time applied to men as well as women. See Vol. VIII. p. 510, n. 4. MALONE.

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CAS. 'Tis truly so.

DES. Let's meet him, and receive him.

CAS. Lo, where he comes!

Enter OTHELLO, and Attendants.

OTH. O my fair warrior!⁵

DES. My dear Othello!

OTH. It gives me wonder great as my content,
To see you here before me. O my soul's joy!
If after every tempest come such calms,⁶
May the winds blow till they have waken'd death!
And let the labouring bark climb hills of seas,
Olympus-high; and duck again as low
As hell's from heaven!⁷ If it were now to die,

⁵ *O my fair warrior!*] Again, in Act III. Desdemona says:
"—unhandsome warrior as I am." This phrase was introduced
by our copiers of the French Sonnetreers. Ronsard frequently calls
his mistresses *guerrieres*; and Southern, his imitator, is not less pro-
digious of the same appellation. Thus, in his fifth Sonnet:

"And, my warrior, my light shines in thy fayre eyes."

Again, in his sixth Sonnet:

"I am not, my cruell warrior, the Thebain," &c.

Again, *ibid*:

"I came not, my warrior, of the blood Lidain."

Had I not met with the word thus fantastically applied, I should
have concluded that Othello called his wife a warrior, because she
had embarked with him on a warlike expedition, and not in conse-
quence of Ovid's observation—

Militat omnis amans, et habet sua castra Cupido. STEEVENS.

⁶ — *come such calms,*] Thus the folio. The quarto, 1622,
reads—*calmness.* STEEVENS.

⁷ *And let the labouring bark climb hills of seas,
Olympus-high; and duck again as low*

As hell's from heaven!] So, in Sidney's *Arcadia*, B. I: "The
sea, making mountaines of itself, over which the tossed and totter-
ing ship should climbe, to be straight carried downe againe to a pit
of bellifb darkenessse." STEEVENS.

'Twere now to be most happy ;¹ for, I fear,
My soul hath her content so absolute,
That not another comfort like to this
Succeeds in unknown fate.

DES. The heavens forbid,
But that our loves and comforts should increase,
Even as our days do grow !²

OTH. Amen to that, sweet powers !—
I cannot speak enough of this content,
It stops me here ; it is too much of joy :
And this, and this, the greatest discords be,
[Kissing her.]
That e'er our hearts shall make !

IAGO. O, you are well tun'd now !
But I'll set down³ the pegs that make this musick,

¹ ——— *If it were now to die,*
'Twere now to be most happy ;] So Cherea, in *The Eunuch of Terence*, Act III. sc. v :

“ ——— Proh Jupiter !

“ Nunc tempus profecto est, cum petiti me possum interfeci,

“ Ne vita aliquâ hoc gaudium contaminet ægritudine.”

MALONE.

² *Even as our days do grow !*] Here is one of those evident interpolations which abound in our author's dramas. Who does not perceive that the words—*Even as our days*, refer to the verb—*increase* in the foregoing line ? Omit therefore the prosaick—*do grow*, (which is perfectly useless) and the metre will be restored to its original regularity.

Fenton has adopted this thought in his *Mariamne* :

“ And mutual passion with our years increase !” STEEVENS.

³ *And this, and this, &c. Kissing her.*] So, in Marlowe's *Lust's Dominion* :

“ I pri'thee, chide, if I have done amiss,

“ But let my punishment be *this and this*.” [Kissing the Moor.

MALONE.

Marlowe's play was written before that of Shakspeare, who might possibly have acted in it. STEEVENS.

² ——— *I'll set down* ———] Thus the old copies, for which the

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As honest as I am.

[*Aside.*

OTH. Come, let's to the castle.—
News, friends; ³ our wars are done, the Turks are
drown'd.

How do our old acquaintance of this isle?—
Honey, you shall be well desir'd in Cyprus,⁴
I have found great love amongst them. O my
sweet,

I prattle out of fashion,⁵ and I dote
In mine own comforts.—I pr'ythee, good Iago,
Go to the bay, and disembark my coffers:
Bring thou the master⁶ to the citadel;

modern editors, following Mr. Pope, have substituted—*let down*. But who can prove that to *set down* was not the language of Shakespeare's time, when a viol was spoken of?—To *set* formerly signified to *tune*, though it is no longer used in that sense. "It was then," says Anthony Wood in his *Diary*, "that I *set* and tuned in strings and fourths," &c. So, in *Skialetbeia*, a Collection of Satires, &c. 1598:

" ——— to a nimbler key
" *Set thy wind instrument.*" MALONE.

To "*set down*" has this meaning in no other part of our author's works. However, *virtus post nummos*: we have secured the phrase, and the exemplification of it may follow when it will.

STEEVENS.

³ *News, friends*;] The modern editors read (after Mr. Rowe) *Now friends*. I would observe once for all, that (in numberless instances in this play, as well as in others) where my predecessors had silently and without reason made alterations, I have as silently restored the old readings. STEEVENS.

⁴ ——— well desir'd in Cyprus,] i. e. much solicited by invitation. So, in *The Letters of the Paston Family*, Vol. I. p. 299: " ——— at the which wedding I was with myn hostes, and also *desyryd* by ye jentylman hymselfe." STEEVENS.

⁵ *I prattle out of fashion*,] Out of method, without any settled order of discourse. JOHNSON.

⁶ ——— the master ———] Dr. Johnson supposed, that by the *master* was meant the *pilot* of the ship, and indeed had high authority for this supposition; for our poet himself seems to have confounded

He is a good one, and his worthiness
Does challenge much respect.—Come, Desdemona,
Once more well met at Cyprus.

[*Exeunt OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, and Attendants.*]

IAGO. Do thou meet me presently at the harbour.
Come hither. If thou be'st valiant as (they say)
base men, being in love, have then a nobility in
their natures⁷ more than is native to them,—list
me. The lieutenant to-night watches on the court
of guard:⁸—First, I must tell thee this—Desde-
mona is directly in love with him.

ROD. With him! why 'tis not possible.

IAGO. Lay thy finger—thus,⁹ and let thy soul be
instructed. Mark me with what violence she first
loved the Moor, but for bragging, and telling her
fantastical lies: And will she love him still for
prating?² let not thy discreet heart think it. Her

them. See Act III. sc. ii. l. 1. But the master is a distinct person, and has the principal command, and care of the navigation of the ship, under the captain, where there is a captain; and in chief, where there is none. The pilot is employed only in navigating the ship into or out of port. MALONE.

“The master (says Smith in his *Sea-grammar*, 1627) and his mates, are to direct the course, command all the sailors, for steering, trimming, and sailing the ship,” &c. STEEVENS.

⁷ — *base men, being in love, have then a nobility in their natures* —] So, in *Hamlet*:

“Nature is fine in love.” MALONE.

⁸ — *the court of guard*:] i. e. the place where the guard musters. So, in *The Family of Love*, 1608:

“Thus have I pass'd the round and court of guard.”

Again, in *The Beggar's Bush*, by Beaumont and Fletcher:

“Visit your courts of guard, view your munition.”

STEEVENS.

⁹ *Lay thy finger—thus,*] On thy mouth, to stop it while thou art listening to a wiser man. JOHNSON.

² *And will she love him still for prating?*] The folio reads—*To love him still for prating!* STEEVENS.

eye must be fed; and what delight shall she have to look on the devil? When the blood is made dull with the act of sport, there should be,—again to inflame it,³ and to give satiety a fresh appetite,—loveliness in favour; sympathy in years, manners, and beauties, all which the Moor is defective in: Now, for want of these required conveniences, her delicate tenderness will find itself abused, begin to heave the gorge, disrelish and abhor the Moor; very nature will instruct her in it, and compel her to some second choice. Now, sir, this granted, (as it is a most pregnant and unforced position,) who stands so eminently in the degree of this fortune, as Cassio does? a knave very voluble; no further conscionable, than in putting on the mere form of civil and humane seeming,⁴ for the better compassing of his salt and most hidden loose affection? why, none; why, none: A slippery and subtle knave; a finder out of occasions; that has an eye can stamp and counterfeit advantages, though true advantage never present itself: A devilish knave! besides, the knave is handsome, young; and hath all those requisites in him, that folly and green minds⁵ look after: A pestilent complete knave; and the woman hath found him already.

ROD. I cannot believe that in her; she is full of most blest'd condition.⁶

IAGO, Bless'd fig's end! the wine she drinks is

³ ——— again to inflame it,] Thus the quarto, 1622. The folio reads—*a game*. STEEVENS.

⁴ ——— and humane seeming,] Thus the folio. The quarto, 1622, reads—and *band-seeming*. MALONE.

⁵ ——— green minds ———] Minds unripe, minds not yet fully formed. JOHNSON.

⁶ ——— condition.] Qualities, disposition of mind. JOHNSON.

See Vol. IX. p. 494, n. 5. MALONE.

made of grapes: if she had been blest'd, she would never have loved the Moor: ~~Blest'd pudding! Didst thou not see her paddle with the palm of his hand? didst not mark that?~~

ROD. Yes, that I did; but that was but courtesy.

IAGO. Lechery, by this hand; an index, and obscure prologue to the history of lust and foul thoughts.⁷ They met so near with their lips, that their breaths embraced together. Villainous thoughts, Roderigo! when these mutualities so marshal the way, hard at hand comes the master and main exercise, the incorporate conclusion: Pish!—But, sir, be you ruled by me: I have brought you from Venice. Watch you to-night; for the command, I'll lay't upon you: Cassio knows you not;—I'll not be far from you: Do you find some occasion to anger Cassio, either by speaking too loud, or tainting⁸ his discipline; or from what other course⁹ you please, which the time shall more favourably minister.

ROD. Well.

IAGO. Sir, he is rash, and very sudden in choler;¹ and, haply, with his truncheon may strike at you: Provoke him, that he may: for, even out of that, will I cause these of Cyprus to mutiny; whose

⁷ — an index, and obscure prologue &c.] That indexes were formerly prefixed to books, appears from a passage in *Troilus and Cressida*. See p. 225, n. 9, of this volume, and Vol. XI. p. 269, n. 2.
MALONE.

⁸ — tainting—] Throwing a slur upon his discipline.

JOHNSON.

So, in *Troilus and Cressida*:

“ In taint of our best man.” STEEVENS.

⁹ — other course—] The first quarto reads—*cause*. STEEVENS.

¹ — sudden in choler;] *Sudden*, is precipitately violent.

JOHNSON.

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qualification shall come into no true taste again,³ but by the displanting of Cassio. So shall you have a shorter journey to your desires, by the means I shall then have to prefer them;⁴ and the impediment most profitably removed, without the which there were no expectation of our prosperity.

ROD. I will do this, if I can bring it to any opportunity.⁵

IAGO. I warrant thee. Meet me by and by at the citadel: I must fetch his necessaries ashore. Farewell.

ROD. Adieu. [Exit.

IAGO. That Cassio loves her, I do well believe it; That she loves him, 'tis apt, and of great credit: The Moor—howbeit that I endure him not,— Is of a constant, loving, noble nature; And, I dare think, he'll prove to Desdemona A most dear husband. Now I do love her too; Not out of absolute lust, (though, peradventure, I stand accountant for as great a sin,)

So, Malcolm, describing Macbeth:

"I grant him bloody,——

"Sudden, malicious——." STEEVENS.

³ — *whose qualification shall come &c.*] Whose resentment shall not be so qualified or tempered, as to be well tasted, as not to retain some bitterness. The phrase is harsh, at least to our ears.

JOHNSON.

Perhaps *qualification* means *fitness to preserve good order, or the regularity of military discipline*. STEEVENS.

—— *no true taste* ——] So the folio. The quarto, 1622, reads—*no true trust*. MALONE.

⁴ — *to prefer them*;] i. e. to *advance* them. So, in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*: "The short and the long is, our play is *preferr'd*." MALONE.

See Vol. XII. p. 395, n. 3. STEEVENS.

⁵ — *if I can bring it to any opportunity*.] Thus the quarto, 1622. The folio reads—*if you can bring it, &c.* MALONE.

But partly led to diet my revenge,
 For that I do suspect the lusty Moor
 Hath leap'd into my seat: the thought whereof
 Doth, like a poisonous mineral,⁷ gnaw my inwards;
 And nothing can or shall content my soul,
 Till I am even with him,⁸ wife for wife;
 Or, failing so, yet that I put the Moor
 At least into a jealousy so strong
 That judgement cannot cure. Which thing to do,—
 If this poor trash of Venice, whom I trash
 For his quick hunting, stand the putting on,⁹

⁷ ——— *like a poisonous mineral,*] This is philosophical. Mineral poisons kill by corrosion. JOHNSON.

⁸ *Till I am even with him,*] Thus the quarto, 1622; the first folio reads:

Till I am *even'd* with him.

i. e. Till I am on a level with him by retaliation.

So, in Heywood's *Iron Age*, 1632, Second Part:

“The stately walls he rear'd, levell'd, and *even'd*.”

Again, in *Tancred and Gismund*, 1592:

“For now the walls are *even'd* with the plain.”

Again, in *Stanyburst's* translation of the first book of Virgil's *Æneid*, 1582:—“*numerus cum navibus æquat*—.”

“—— with the ships the number is *even'd*.” STEEVENS.

⁹ ——— *Which thing to do,*—

If this poor trash of Venice, whom I trash

For his quick hunting, stand the putting on,] The quarto, 1622, has—*crush*, the folio reads—*trace*, an apparent corruption of—*trash*; for as to the idea of *crushing a dog*, to prevent him from *quick hunting*, it is too ridiculous to be defended.

To *trash*, is still a hunter's phrase, and signifies (See Vol. III. p. 16, n. 9,) to fasten a weight on the neck of a dog, when his speed is superior to that of his companions. Thus, says Catarrh, in *The Bonduca* of Beaumont and Fletcher, (the quotation was the late Mr. T. Warton's, though misunderstood by him as to its appropriate meaning):

“——— I fled too,

“But not so fast; your jewel had been lost then,

“Young Hengo there: he *trash'd* me, Nennius,—.”

i. e. he was the clog that restrained my activity.

This sense of the word—*trash* has been so repeatedly confirmed

I'll have our Michael Cassio on the hip;²
 Abuse him to the Moor in the rank garb,³—
 For I fear Cassio with my night-cap too;
 Make the Moor thank me, love me, and reward me,
 For making him egregiously an ass,
 And practising upon his peace and quiet
 Even to madness. 'Tis here, but yet confus'd;
 Knavery's plain face is never seen,⁴ till us'd.

[Exit.

to me by those whom I cannot suspect of wanting information relative to their most favourite pursuits, that I do not hesitate to throw off the load of unsatisfactory notes with which the passage before us has hitherto been oppressed.

Traß, in the first instance, (though Dr. Warburton would change it into—*brach*,) may be used to signify a worthless hound, as the same term is afterwards employed to describe a worthless female:

"Gentlemen all, I do suspect this *traß*."

It is scarce necessary to support the present jingle on the word—*traß*, by examples, it is so much in our author's manner, although his worst.

Stand the putting on, may mean—*does not start too soon after Desdemona*, and so destroy my scheme by injudicious precipitation. But I rather think, these words have reference to the enterprize of provoking Cassio, and will then imply,—*if he has courage enough for the attempt to which I have just incited, or put him on*. For an example of the latter phrase, see p. 466, n. 4. STEEVENS.

² *I'll have our Michael Cassio on the hip*;] A phrase from the art of wrestling. JOHNSON.

³ — *in the rank garb*,] Thus the quarto, and, I think, rightly. *Rank garb*, I believe, means, *grossly*, i. e. *without mincing the matter*. So, in Marston's *Dutch Courtesan*, 1604:

"Whither, in the *rank* name of madness, whither?"

STEEVENS.

The folio reads—in the *right* garb. *Rank*, perhaps, means not only *gross*, but *lascivious*. So, in *The Merchant of Venice*:

"—the ewes, being *rank*,

"In end of autumn," &c. MALONE.

⁴ *Knavery's plain face is never seen*,] An honest man acts upon a plan, and forecasts his designs; but a knave depends upon temporary and local opportunities, and never knows his own purpose, but at the time of execution. JOHNSON.

S C E N E II.

*A Street.**Enter a Herald, with a proclamation: people following.*

HER. It is Othello's pleasure, our noble and valiant general, that, upon certain tidings now arrived, importing the mere perdition³ of the Turkish fleet, every man put himself into triumph;⁴ some to dance, some to make bonfires, each man to what sport and revels his addiction⁵ leads him; for, besides these beneficial news, it is the celebration of his nuptials: So much was his pleasure should be proclaimed. All offices are open;⁶ and there is full liberty of feasting,⁷ from this present hour of five, till the bell hath told eleven. Heaven bless the isle of Cyprus, and our noble general, Othello! [*Exeunt.*

³ — mere perdition —] *Mere* in this place signifies *entire*. So, in *Hamlet*:

“ ——— possesses it *merely*. STEEVENS.

⁴ — put himself into triumph;] This whimsical phraseology occurs again in *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*:

“ So puts himself into the shipman's toil.” STEEVENS.

⁵ — his addiction —] The first quarto reads—his *mind*.

STEEVENS.

⁶ All offices are open;] i. e. all rooms, or places, in the castle, at which refreshments are prepared, or served out. So, in *Macbeth*:

“ Sent forth great largesse to your offices.”

See Vol. VII. p. 401, n. 8. STEEVENS.

⁷ — of feasting,] These words are not in the original quarto, 1622. MALONE.

SCENE III.

A Hall in the Castle.

Enter OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, CASSIO, and *Attendants.*

OTH. Good Michael, look you to the guard to-night:

Let's teach ourselves that honourable stop,
Not to out-sport discretion.

CAS. Iago hath direction what to do;
But, notwithstanding, with my personal eye
Will I look to't.

OTH. Iago is most honest.

Michael, good night; To-morrow, with our earliest,
Let me have speech with you.—Come, my dear love;
The purchase made, the fruits are to ensue;

[*To* DESDEMONA.

That profit's yet to come 'twixt me and you.—

Good night. [*Exeunt* OTH. DES. and *Attend.*

Enter IAGO.

CAS. Welcome, Iago: We must to the watch.

IAGO. Not this hour, lieutenant; 'tis not yet ten
o'clock: Our general cast us^s thus early, for the

^s *Our general cast us—*] That is, *appointed us to our stations.* To *cast the play*, is, in the style of the theatres, to assign to every actor his proper part. JOHNSON.

We have just now been assured by the Herald, that there was "full liberty of feasting &c. till eleven."

Perhaps therefore *cast us* only means dismissed us, or *got rid of our company*. So, in one of the following scenes: "You are but now *cast* in his mood;" i. e. *turn'd out of your office in his anger*; and in the first scene it means to *dismiss*.

So, in *The Witch*, a MS. tragi-comedy, by Middleton:

love of his Desdemona : whom let us not therefore blame ; he hath not yet made wanton the night with her ; and she is sport for Jove.

CAS. She's a most exquisite lady.

IAGO. And, I'll warrant her, full of game.

CAS. Indeed, she is a most fresh and delicate creature.

IAGO. What an eye she has ! methinks, it sounds a parley of provocation.⁸

CAS. An inviting eye ; and yet, methinks, right modest.

IAGO. And, when she speaks, is it not an alarm⁹ to love ?²

CAS. She is, indeed, perfection.³

IAGO. Well, happiness to their sheets ! Come, lieutenant, I have a stoop of wine ; and here without are a brace of Cyprus gallants, that would fain have a measure to the health of the black Othello.

" She cast off

" My company betimes to-night, by tricks," &c.

STEEVENS.

⁸ — *a parley of provocation.*] So, the quarto, 1622. Folio—to provocation. MALONE.

⁹ — *an alarm* —] The voice may sound an alarm more properly than the eye can sound a parley. JOHNSON.

The eye is often said to *speak*. Thus we frequently hear of the language of the eye. Surely that which can talk may, without any violent stretch of the figure be allowed to sound a parley. The folio reads—*parley to provocation*. RITSON.

So, in *Troilus and Crissida* :

" There's language in her eye" &c.

See Vol. XI. p. 382, n. 3. STEEVENS.

² — *is it not an alarm to love?*] The quartos read—'tis an alarm to love. STEEVENS.

³ *She is, indeed, perfection.*] In this and the seven short speeches preceding, the decent character of Cassio is most powerfully contrasted with that of the licentious Iago. STEEVENS.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 481

CAS. Not to-night, good Iago; I have very poor and unhappy brains for drinking: I could well wish courtesy would invent some other custom of entertainment.

IAGO. O, they are our friends; but one cup: I'll drink for you.

CAS. I have drunk but one cup to-night, and that was craftily qualified⁴ too, and, behold, what innovation it makes here: I am unfortunate in the infirmity, and dare not task my weakness with any more.

IAGO. What, man! 'tis a night of revels; the gallants desire it.

CAS. Where are they?

IAGO. Here at the door; I pray you, call them in.

CAS. I'll do't; but it dislikes me.

[*Exit CASSIO.*]

IAGO. If I can fasten but one cup upon him,
With that which he hath drunk to-night already,
He'll be as full of quarrel and offence
As my young mistress' dog. Now, my sick fool,
Roderigo,
Whom love has turn'd almost the wrong side out-
ward,
To Desdemona hath to-night carous'd
Potations pottle deep; and he's to watch:
Three lads of Cyprus,⁵—noble swelling spirits,
That hold their honours in a wary distance,

⁴ — *craftily qualified*—] Slightly mixed with water.

JOHNSON.

⁵ *Three lads of Cyprus,*] The folio reads—*Three else of Cyprus.*

STEEVENS.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 483

*And let me the canakin clink, clink; [Sings.
And let me the canakin clink:*

A soldier's a man;

A life's but a span;²

Why then, let a soldier drink.

Some wine, boys! [Wine brought in.

CAS. 'Fore heaven, an excellent song.

IAGO. I learn'd it in England, where (indeed) they are most potent in potting:³ your Dane, your German,⁴ and your swag-bellied Hollander,—Drink, ho!—are nothing to your English.

CAS. Is your Englishman so expert in his drinking?⁵

IAGO. Why, he drinks you, with facility, your Dane dead drunk; he sweats not to overthrow your Almain; he gives your Hollander a vomit, ere the next pottle can be fill'd.

² *A life's but a span;*] Thus the quarto. The folio reads,
Oh man's life but a span. STEEVENS.

³ — in England, where (indeed) they are most potent in potting:]
Les meilleurs buveurs en Angleterre, is an ancient French proverb.
STEEVENS.

⁴ — most potent in potting: your Dane, your German, &c.]
“ Enquire at ordinaries: there must be fallers for the Italian,
tooth-picks for the Spaniard, pots for the German!” Prologue to
Lyly's Midas, 1592. MALONE.

— your Dane,] See p. 61, n. 7. STEEVENS.

⁵ — so expert in his drinking?] Thus the quarto, 1622.
Folio—so exquisite. This accomplishment in the English is likewise mentioned by Beaumont and Fletcher in *The Captain*:

“ Lod. Are the Englishmen

“ Such stubborn drinkers?

“ Pijo. — not a leak at sea

“ Can suck more liquor; you shall have their children

“ Christen'd in mull'd sack, and at five years old

“ Able to knock a Dane down.” STEEVENS.

CAS. To the health of our general.

MON. I am for it, lieutenant; and I'll do you justice.⁵

IAGO. O sweet England!

*King Stephen⁶ was a worthy peer,⁷
His breeches cost him but a crown;
He held them sixpence all too dear,
With that he call'd the tailor—lown.⁸*

*He was a wight of high renown,
And thou art but of low degree:
'Tis pride that pulls the country down,
Then take thine auld cloak about thee.*

Some wine, ho!

CAS. Why, this is a more exquisite song than the other.

IAGO. Will you hear it again?

CAS. No; for I hold him to be unworthy of his

⁵ ——— I'll do you justice.] i. e. drink as much as you do. See Vol. IX. p. 229, n. 4. STEEVENS.

⁶ *King Stephen &c.*] These stanzas are taken from an old song, which the reader will find recovered and preserved in a curious work lately printed, entitled, *Relicks of Ancient Poetry*, consisting of old heroick ballads, songs, &c. 3 vols. 12mo. JOHNSON.

So, in Greene's *Quip for an Upstart Courtier*: "King Stephen wore a pair of cloth breeches of a noble a pair, and thought them passing costly." STEEVENS.

⁷ ——— a worthy peer,] i. e. a worthy fellow. In this sense *peer*, *feré*, and *pheere*, are often used by the writers of our earliest romances. STEEVENS.

A *worthy peer* is a *worthy lord*, a title frequently bestowed upon kings in our old romances. So, in *Amadis de Gaule*, 1619: "Sir, although you be a king and a great lord." Spenser constantly uses the word *peer* in this sense. *Pheere* is in every respect a very different word. RITSON.

⁸ ——— *lown.*] Sorry fellow, paltry wretch. JOHNSON.

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place, that does those things.—Well,—Heaven's above all; and there be souls that must be saved, and there be souls must not be saved.

IAGO. It's true, good lieutenant.

CAS. For mine own part,—no offence to the general, nor any man of quality,—I hope to be saved.

IAGO. And so do I too, lieutenant.

CAS. Ay, but, by your leave, not before me; the lieutenant is to be saved before the ancient. Let's have no more of this; let's to our affairs.—Forgive us our sins!—Gentlemen, let's look to our business. Do not think, gentlemen, I am drunk; this is my ancient;—this is my right hand, and this is my left hand:—I am not drunk now; I can stand well enough, and speak well enough.

ALL. Excellent well.

CAS. Why, very well, then: you must not think then that I am drunk. *[Exit.*

MON. To the platform, masters; come, let's set the watch.

IAGO. You see this fellow, that is gone before;—
He is a soldier, fit to stand by Cæsar
And give direction: and do but see his vice;
'Tis to his virtue a just equinox,
The one as long as the other: 'tis pity of him.
I fear, the trust Othello puts him in,
On some odd time of his infirmity,
Will shake this island.

MON. But is he often thus?

IAGO. 'Tis evermore the prologue to his sleep:
He'll watch the horologe a double set,²

² *He'll watch the horologe a double set, &c.]* If he have no drink, he'll keep awake while the clock strikes two rounds, or four-and-twenty hours.

If drink rock not his cradle.

MON. It were well,
The general were put in mind of it.
Perhaps, he sees it not; or his good nature
Prizes the virtue that appears in Cassio,
And looks not on his evils; Is not this true?

Enter RODERIGO.

IAGO. How now, Roderigo? [*Aside.*
I pray you, after the lieutenant; go.

[*Exit RODERIGO.*

MON. And 'tis great pity, that the noble Moor
Should hazard such a place, as his own second,
With one of an ingraft infirmity:

Chaucer uses the word *borologe* in more places than one:

"Well fikerer was his crowing in his loge

"Than is a clock or abbey *borologe*." JOHNSON.

So, Heywood, in his *Epigrams on Proverbs*, 1562:

"The divell is in *thorologe*, the houres to trye,

"Searche houres by the funne, the devyl's dyal wyll lye:

"The devyl is in *thorologe*, nowe cheere in bowles,

"Let the devyl keepe our clockes, while God keepe our
soules."

Again, in *The Devil's Charter*, 1607:

"— my gracious lord,

"By Sisto's *borologe* 'tis struck eleven." STEEVENS.

² — *ingraft infirmity*:] An infirmity rooted, settled in his constitution. JOHNSON.

Dr. Johnson's explanation seems to fall short of the poet's meaning. The qualities of a tree are so changed by being engrafted, that its future fruits are not such as would have naturally sprung from the stock, but derive their qualities from the graft inserted into it. Conformably to this idea, is the assertion of Hamlet concerning the same vice in his countrymen:

"They clepe us drunkards," &c.

See p. 61. HENLEY.

Dr. Johnson's explanation is certainly just, though it has been controverted. So, in *King Lear*:—"then must we look to receive

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 487

It were an honest action, to say
So to the Moor.

IAGO. Not I, for this fair island:
I do love Cassio well; and would do much
To cure him of this evil. But, hark! what noise?
[*Cry within,—Help! help!*]

Re-enter CASSIO, driving in RODERIGO.

CAS. You rogue! you rascal!

MON. What's the matter, lieutenant?

CAS. A knave!—teach me my duty!
I'll beat the knave into a twiggen bottle.³

ROD. Beat me!

CAS. Dost thou prate, rogue?

[*Striking RODERIGO.*]

MON. Nay, good lieutenant;
[*Staying him.*]

I pray you, fir, hold your hand.

CAS. Let me go, fir,
Or I'll knock you o'er the mazzard.

MON. Come, come, you're drunk.

CAS. Drunk! [They fight.]

IAGO. Away, I say! go out, and cry—a mutiny.
[*Aside to ROD. who goes out.*]

Nay, good lieutenant,—alas, gentlemen,—
Help, ho!—Lieutenant,—fir,—Montano,—fir;—
Help, masters!—Here's a goodly watch, indeed!
[*Bell rings.*]

from his age not alone the *imperfection* of long *ingrafted* condition,
but there-withal," &c. MALONE.

³ — into a twiggen bottle.] A twiggen bottle is a *wickier'd*
bottle; and so the quarto reads. STEEVENS.

Who's that that rings the bell?—Diablo,⁶ ho!
The town will rise: God's will, lieutenant! hold,
You will be sham'd for ever.

Enter OTHELLO, and Attendants.

OTH. What is the matter here?

MON. I bleed still, I am hurt to the death;—he dies.⁷

OTH. Hold, for your lives.

IAGO. Hold, hold, lieutenant,⁸—fir, Montano,—
gentlemen,—

Have you forgot all sence of place and duty?⁹

⁶ ——— *Diablo*,] I meet with this exclamation in Marlowe's *King Edward II.* 1598: "*Diablo?* what passions call you these?"

STEEVENS.

⁷ *I bleed still, I am hurt to the death*;—he dies.] The first quarto reads—'Zounds, I bleed &c. STEEVENS.

The editor of the folio, thinking it necessary to omit the first word in the line, absurdly supplied its place by adding at the end of the line, *He dies*.

I had formerly inadvertently said that the marginal direction, *He faints*, was found in the quarto, 1622: but this was a mistake. It was inserted in a quarto of no value or authority, printed in 1630. MALONE.

——— *I am hurt to the death*;—he dies.] *Montano* thinks he is mortally wounded, yet by these words he seems determined to continue the duel, and to kill his antagonist *Cassio*. So when *Roderigo* runs at *Cassio*, in the fifth act, he says,—“Villain, thou diest.”

TOLLET.

He dies, i. e. he shall die. He may be supposed to say this as he is offering to renew the fight.

Thus likewise *Othello* himself, in his very next speech:

“——— *he dies* upon his motion.”

I do not therefore regard these words, when uttered by *Montano*, as an absurd addition in the first folio. STEEVENS.

⁸ *Hold, bold*, lieutenant,] Thus the original quarto. The folio reads—*Hold ho*, lieutenant. MALONE.

⁹ ——— *all sence of place and duty?*] So Sir Thomas Hanmer, The rest:

——— *all place of sence and duty?* JOHNSON.

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Hold, hold! the general speaks to you; hold, for shame!

OTH. Why, how now, ho! from whence ariseth this?

Are we turn'd Turks; and to ourselves do that,
Which heaven hath forbid the Ottomites?

For christian shame, put by this barbarous brawl:

He that stirs next to carve for his own rage,

Holds his soul light; he dies upon his motion.—

Silence that dreadful bell,² it frights the isle

From her propriety.³—What is the matter, masters?—

Honest Iago, that look'st dead with grieving,

Speak, who began this? on thy love, I charge thee.

IAGO. I do not know;—friends all but now, even now,

In quarter,⁴ and in terms like bride and groom

² *Silence that dreadful bell,*] It was a common practice formerly, when any great affray happened in a town, to ring the alarum bell. When David Rizzio was murdered at Edinburgh, the Provost ordered the *common bell* to be rung, and five hundred persons were immediately assembled. See Saunderfon's Hist. of Queen Mary, p. 41. MALONE.

At Paris the *Tocfin* is still rung as often as fires or disturbances break out. STEEVENS.

³ — *it frights the isle*

From her propriety.] From her regular and proper state.

JOHNSON.

⁴ *In quarter,*] In their quarters; at their lodging. JOHNSON.

Rather at *peace, quiet*. They had been on that very spot (the court or platform, it is presumed before the castle) ever since Othello left them, which can scarcely be called being *in their quarters*, or *at their lodging*. RITSON.

So, in *The Dumb Knight*, Act III. sc. i:

“Did not you hold fair *quarter* and commerce with all the spies of Cyprus.” REED.

It required one example, if no more, to evince that *in quarter* ever signified *quiet, at peace*. But a little attention would have shown, that the *them*, whom he speaks of Othello's having left, was *only*

Devesting them for bed: and then, but now,
 (As if some planet had unwitted men,)
 Swords out, and tilting one at other's breast,
 In opposition bloody. I cannot speak
 Any beginning to this peevish odds;
 And 'would in action glorious I had lost
 These legs, that brought me to a part of it!

OTH. How comes it, Michael, you are thus forgot?^s

Cassio; who, being joined by Iago, where Othello (but not on the platform) had just left him, is dissuaded from setting the watch immediately; entreated to partake of a stoop of wine, in company with a brace of Cyprus gallants, then waiting without; and prevailed upon, though reluctantly, to invite them in. In this apartment the carousal happens, and wine is repeatedly called for, till at last Cassio, finding its too powerful effects, goes out to set the watch. At the proposal of Montano, himself and Iago follow Cassio towards the platform, and the latter sets on Roderigo to insult him. The scuffle ensues; an alarm is given, and Othello comes forth to inquire the cause. When, therefore, Iago answers:

I do not know:—friends all but now, even now

In quarter—

it is evident the *quarter* referred to, was *that apartment of the castle assigned to the officers on guard*, where Othello, after giving Cassio his orders, had, a little before, left him; and where Iago, with his companions, immediately found him. HENLEY.

In quarter,] i. e. on our station. So, in *Timon of Athens*:

“ ——— to atone your fears

“ With my more noble meaning, not a man

“ Shall pass his *quarter*.”

Their *station* or *quarter* in the present instance, was the guard-room in Othello's castle. In *Cymbeline* we have—“ their *quarter's* fires,” i. e. their fires regularly disposed.

In *quarter* Dr. Johnson supposed to mean, at *their lodgings*; but that cannot be the meaning, for Montano and the gentlemen who accompanied him, had continued, from the time of their entrance, in the apartment in Othello's castle, in which the carousal had been; and Cassio had only gone forth for a short time to the platform, to set the watch. On his return from the platform into the apartment, in which he left Montano and Iago, he meets Roderigo; and the scuffle, first between Cassio and Roderigo, and then between Montano and Cassio, ensues. MALONE.

^s ——— *you are thus forgot?*] i. e. you have thus forgot yourself.

STEEVEN.

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CAS. I pray you, pardon me, I cannot speak.

OTH. Worthy Montano, you were wont be civil;
The gravity and stillness of your youth
The world hath noted, and your name is great
In mouths of wisest censure; What's the matter,
That you unlace⁶ your reputation thus,
And spend your rich opinion,⁷ for the name
Of a night-brawler? give me answer to it.

MON. Worthy Othello, I am hurt to danger;
Your officer, Iago, can inform you—
While I spare speech, which something now offends
me,—

Of all that I do know: nor know I aught,
By me that's said or done amiss this night;
Unless self-charity⁸ be sometime a vice;
And to defend ourselves it be a sin,
When violence assails us.

OTH. Now, by heaven,
My blood begins my safer guides to rule;
And passion, having my best judgement collied,⁹

⁶ *That you unlace* —] Slacken, or loosen. Put in danger of dropping; or perhaps strip of its ornaments. JOHNSON.

A similar phrase occurs in *Twelfth-Night*:

“ I pr'ythee now, ungird thy strangeness.” STEEVENS.

⁷ — *spend your rich opinion*,] Throw away and squander a reputation so valuable as yours. JOHNSON.

⁸ — *self-charity* —] Care of one's self. JOHNSON.

⁹ *And passion, having my best judgement collied*,] Thus the folio reads, and I believe rightly. Othello means, that passion has discoloured his judgement. The word is used in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*:

“ — like lightning in the collied night.”

To *colly* anciently signified to besmear, to blacken as with coal. So, in a comedy called *The Family of Love*, 1608: “ — carry thy link a't'other side the way, thou *collow'st* me and my ruffe.” The word (as I am assured) is still used in the midland counties.

Mr. Toller informs me that *Wallis's History of Northumberland*, p. 46, says, “ — in our northern counties it [i. e. a fine black clay

Affays to lead the way: If I once stir,
 Or do but lift this arm, the best of you
 Shall sink in my rebuke. Give me to know
 How this foul rout began, who set it on;
 And he that is approv'd in this offence,²
 Though he had twinn'd with me, both at a birth,
 Shall lose me.—What! in a town of war,
 Yet wild, the people's hearts brimfull of fear,
 To manage private and domestick quarrel,
 In night, and on the court and guard of safety!³

or ochre] is commonly known by the name of *collow* or *killow*, by which name it is known by Dr. Woodward," &c. The doctor says it had its name from *kollow*, by which name, in the North, the *smut* or *grime* on the top of chimneys is called. *Colly*, however, is from *coal*, as *collier*. Sir Thomas Hanmer reads—*cboler'd*.

STEEVEN.

Coles in his Dictionary, 1679, renders "*collow'd* by *denigratum*:—to *colly*," *denigro*.

The quarto, 1622, reads—having my best judgement *cool'd*. A modern editor supposed that *quell'd* was the word intended.

MALONE.

² — *he that is approv'd in this offence*,] He that is convicted by proof, of having been engaged in this offence. JOHNSON.

³ *In night, and on the court and guard of safety!*] Thus the old copies. Mr. Malone reads:

In night, and on the court of guard and safety! STEEVENS.

These words have undoubtedly been transposed by negligence at the press. For this emendation, of which I am confident every reader will approve, I am answerable. The *court of guard* was the common phrase of the time for the *guard-room*. It has already been used by Iago in a former scene; and what still more strongly confirms the emendation, Iago is there speaking of *Cassio*, and describing him as about to be placed in the very station where he now appears: "The lieutenant to-night watches on the *court of guard*."

Again, in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

"If we be not reliev'd within this hour,

"We must return to the *court of guard*."

The same phrase occurs in *Sir John Oldcastle*, 1600, and in many other old plays. A similar mistake has happened in the present scene, where in the original copy we find:

"Have you forgot *all place of sense* and duty?
 instead of—*all sense of place* and duty.

'Tis monstrous.⁴—Iago, who began it?

MON. If partially affin'd,⁵ or leagu'd in office,⁶

I may venture to assert with confidence, that no editor of Shakspeare has more sedulously adhered to the ancient copies than I have done, or more steadily opposed any change grounded merely on obsolete or unusual phraseology. But the error in the present case is so apparent, and the phrase, *the court of guard*, so established by the uniform usage of the poets of Shakspeare's time, that not to have corrected the mistake of the compositor in the present instance, would in my apprehension have been unwarrantable. If the phraseology of the old copies had merely been unusual, I should not have ventured to make the slightest change: but the frequent occurrence of the phrase, *the court of guard*, in all our old plays, and that being *the word of art*, leave us not room to entertain a doubt of its being the true reading.

Mr. Steevens says, a phraseology as unusual occurs in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*; but he forgets that it is supported by the usage of contemporary writers. When any such is produced in support of that before us, it ought certainly to be attended to.

I may add, that *the court of safety* may in a metaphorical sense be understood; but who ever talked of *the guard* [i. e. the *safety*] of *safety*? MALONE.

As a collocation of words, as seemingly perverse, occurs in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, and is justified there, in the following instance—

“ I shall desire *you* of more acquaintance;”

I forbear to disturb the text under consideration.

If *Safety*, like the Roman *Salus*, or *Recovery* in *King Lear*, be personified, where is the impropriety of saying—under the *guard* of *Safety*? Thus, Plautus, in his *Captivi*: “ Neque jam *servare Salus*, si vult, me potest.”

Mr. Malone also appears to forget that, on a preceding occasion, he too has left an unexemplified and very questionable phrase, in the text of this tragedy, hoping, we may suppose, (as I do,) that it will be hereafter countenanced by example. See p. 470, n. 2.

STEEVENS.

⁴ 'Tis monstrous.] This word was used as a trisyllable, as if it were written *monstferous*. MALONE.

It is again used as a trisyllable in *Macbeth*. See Vol. VII. p. 494, n. 6. STEEVENS.

⁵ If partially affin'd,] *Affin'd* is bound by proximity of relation-

Thou dost deliver more or less than truth,
Thou art no soldier.

IAGO. Touch me not so near:
I had rather have this tongue cut from my mouth,¹
Than it should do offence to Michael Cassio;
Yet, I persuade myself, to speak the truth
Shall nothing wrong him.—Thus it is, general.
Montano and myself being in speech,
There comes a fellow, crying out for help;
And Cassio following him² with determin'd sword,
To execute upon him: Sir, this gentleman
Steps in to Cassio, and entreats his pause;
Myself the crying fellow did pursue,
Left, by his clamour, (as it so fell out,)
The town might fall in fright: he, swift of foot,
Outran my purpose; and I return'd the rather
For that I heard the clink and fall of swords,
And Cassio high in oath; which, till to-night,
I ne'er might say before: When I came back,
(For this was brief,) I found them close together,
At blow, and thrust; even as again they were,
When you yourself did part them.
More of this matter can I not report:—
But men are men; the best sometimes forget:—
Though Cassio did some little wrong to him,—
As men in rage strike those that with them best,—

ship; but here it means related by nearness of office. In the first scene it is used in the former of these senses:

“ If I, in any just term, am *affin'd*

“ To love the Moor.” STEEVENS.

⁶ — leagu'd in office,] Old copies—*league*. Corrected by Mr. Pope. MALONE.

⁷ — cut from my mouth,] Thus the folio. The quarto, 1622, reads—this tongue out from my mouth. MALONE.

⁸ And Cassio following him —] The word *him* in this line seems to have crept into it from the compositor's eye glancing on that below. MALONE.

Yet, surely, Cassio, I believe, receiv'd,
From him that fled, some strange indignity,
Which patience could not pass.

OTH. I know, Iago,
Thy honesty and love doth mince this matter,
Making it light to Cassio:—Cassio, I love thee;
But never more be officer of mine.—

Enter DESDEMONA, attended.

Look, if my gentle love be not rais'd up;—
I'll make thee an example.

DES. What's the matter, dear?

OTH. All's well now, sweeting;⁹ Come away to
bed.

Sir, for your hurts,
Myself will be your surgeon: Lead him off.²

[To MONTANO, who is led off.]

Iago, look with care about the town;
And silence those whom this vile brawl distracted.—
Come, Desdemona; 'tis the soldiers' life,
To have their balmy slumbers wak'd with strife.

[Exeunt all but IAGO and CASSIO.]

IAGO. What, are you hurt, lieutenant?

CAS. Ay, past all surgery.

IAGO. Marry, heaven forbid!

CAS. Reputation, reputation, reputation! O, I
have lost my reputation! I have lost the immortal

⁹ —sweeting;] This surfeiting vulgar term of fondness originates from the name of an apple distinguished only by its insipid sweetness. STEEVENS.

² Lead him off.] I am persuaded, these words were originally a marginal direction. In our old plays all the stage-directions were couched in imperative terms:—*Play musick—Ring the bell—Lead him off.* MALONE.

part, fir, of myself, and what remains is bestial.—My reputation, Iago, my reputation.

IAGO. As I am an honest man, I thought you had received some bodily wound; there is more offence in that, than in reputation.² Reputation is an idle and most false imposition; oft got without merit, and lost without deserving: You have lost no reputation at all, unless you repute yourself such a loser. What, man! there are ways to recover the general again: You are but now cast in his mood,³ a punishment more in policy than in malice; even so as one would beat his offenceless dog, to affright an imperious lion: sue to him again, and he's yours.

CAS. I will rather sue to be despised, than to deceive so good a commander, with so slight,⁴ so drunken, and so indiscreet an officer. Drunk? and speak parrot?⁵ and squabble? swagger? swear? and discourse fustian with one's own shadow?—O thou invisible spirit of wine, if thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee—devil!

² ——— [*there is more offence &c.*] Thus the quartos. The folio reads—there is more *sense*, &c. STEEVENS.

³ ——— [*cast in his mood*,] Ejected in his anger. JOHNSON.

⁴ ——— [*so slight*,] Thus the folio. The quarto, 1622, reads—*so light*. MALONE.

⁵ ——— [*and speak parrot?*] A phrase signifying to act foolishly and childishly. So Skelton:

“ These maidens full mekely with many a divers flour,

“ Freshly they drefs and make sweete my boure,

“ With *spake parrot* I pray you full courteously thei *saye*.”

WARBURTON.

So, in Lyly's *Woman in the Moon*, 1597:

“ Thou pretty *parrot*, *speak* a while.”

These lines are wanting in the first quarto. STEEVENS.

From *Drunk*, &c. to *shadow*, inclusively, is wanting in the quarto, 1622. By “*speak parrot*,” surely the poet meant, “*talk idly*,” and not, as Dr. Warburton supposes, “*act foolishly*.”

MALONE.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 497

IAGO. What was he that you follow'd with your sword? What had he done to you?

CAS. I know not.

IAGO. Is it possible?

CAS. I remember a mass of things, but nothing distinctly; a quarrel, but nothing wherefore.—O, that men should put an enemy in their mouths, to steal away their brains! that we should, with joy, revel, pleasure, and applause, transform ourselves into beasts!

IAGO. Why, but you are now well enough; How came you thus recover'd?

CAS. It hath pleased the devil, drunkenness, to give place to the devil, wrath: one unperfectness shows me another, to make me frankly despise myself.

IAGO. Come, you are too severe a moraler: As the time, the place, and the condition of this country stands, I could heartily wish this had not befallen; but, since it is as it is, mend it for your own good.

CAS. I will ask him for my place again; he shall tell me, I am a drunkard! Had I as many mouths as Hydra, such an answer would stop them all. To be now a sensible man, by and by a fool, and presently a beast! O strange!—Every inordinate cup is unblest'd, and the ingredient is a devil.

IAGO. Come, come, good wine is a good familiar creature, if it be well used; exclaim no more against it. And, good lieutenant, I think, you think I love you.

CAS. I have well approved it, sir.—I drunk!

IAGO. You, or any man living, may be drunk at some time, man. I'll tell you what you shall

do. Our general's wife is now the general ;—I may say so in this respect, for that he hath devoted and given up himself to the contemplation, mark, and denotement of her parts and graces :⁵—confess yourself freely to her ; importune her ; she'll help to put you in your place again : she is of so free, so kind, so apt, so blessed a disposition, that she holds it a vice in her goodness, not to do more than she is requested : This broken joint,⁶ between you and her husband, entreat her to splinter ; and, my fortunes against any lay⁷ worth naming, this crack of your love shall grow stronger than it was before.

CAS. You advise me well.

IAGO. I protest, in the sincerity of love, and honest kindness.

CAS. I think it freely ; and, betimes in the morning, will I beseech the virtuous Desdemona to undertake for me : I am desperate of my fortunes, if they check me here.

⁵ ——— for that he hath devoted and given up himself to the contemplation, mark, and denotement of her parts and graces :] [Old copies—devoteinent.] I remember, it is said of Antony, in the beginning of his tragedy, that he who used to fix his eyes altogether on the dreadful ranges of war :

“ ——— now bends, now turns,

“ The office and devotion of their view

“ Upon a tawny front.”

This is finely expressed ; but I cannot persuade myself that our poet would ever have said, any one devoted himself to the devote-ment of any thing. All the copies agree ; but the mistake certainly arose from a single letter being turned upside down at press.

THEOBALD.

The same mistake has happened in *Hamlet*, and in several other places. See Vol. III. p. 474, n. 3. MALONE.

⁶ ——— This broken joint,] Thus the folio. The original copy reads—This brawl. MALONE.

⁷ ——— any lay —] i. e. any bet, any wager. RITSON.

So, in *Cymbeline* : “ I will have it no lay.” STEEVENS.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 499

IAGO. You are in the right. Good night, lieutenant ; I must to the watch.

CAS. Good night, honest Iago. [*Exit CASSIO.*]

IAGO. And what's he then, that says,—I play the villain?

When this advice is free,⁸ I give, and honest,
 Probal⁹ to thinking, and (indeed) the course
 To win the Moor again? For 'tis most easy
 The inclining Desdemona² to subdue
 In any honest suit ; she's fram'd as fruitful³
 As the free elements.⁴ And then for her
 To win the Moor,—were't to renounce his baptism,
 All seals and symbols of redeemed sin,—
 His soul is so enfetters'd to her love,
 That she may make, unmake, do what she list,
 Even as her appetite shall play the god
 With his weak function. How am I then a villain,
 To counsel Cassio to this parallel course,⁵

⁸ — *this advice is free,*] This counsel has an appearance of honest openness, of frank good-will. JOHNSON.

Rather *gratis*, not *paid for*, as his advice to Roderigo was.

HENLEY.

⁹ *Probal* —] Thus the old editions. There may be such a contraction of the word *probable*, but I have not met with it in any other book. Yet abbreviations as violent occur in our ancient writers, and especially in the works of Churchyard. STEEVENS.

² *The inclining Desdemona* —] *Inclining* here signifies *compliant*. MALONE.

³ — *fruitful* —] Corresponding to *benignus*, ἀφ' ὧτος.

HENLEY.

⁴ — *as fruitful*

As the free elements.] Liberal, bountiful, as the elements, out of which all things are produced. JOHNSON.

⁵ — *to this parallel course,*] Parallel, for even ; because parallel lines run even and equidistant. WARBURTON.

Directly to his good? Divinity of hell!
 When devils will their blackest sins put on,
 They do suggest⁶ at first with heavenly shows,
 As I do now: For, while this honest fool
 Plies Desdemona to repair his fortunes,
 And she for him pleads strongly to the Moor,
 I'll pour this pestilence⁷ into his ear,—
 That she repeals him⁸ for her body's lust;
 And, by how much she strives to do him good,
 She shall undo her credit with the Moor.
 So will I turn her virtue into pitch;
 And out of her own goodness make the net,
 That shall enmesh them all.⁹—How now, Roderigo?

Enter RODERIGO.

ROD. I do follow here in the chace, not like a
 hound that hunts, but one that fills up the cry.
 My money is almost spent; I have been to-night

So, in our author's 70th Sonnet:

“ Time doth transfix the flourish set on youth,
 “ And delves the *parallels* in beauty's brow.” MALONE.

Parallel course; i. e. *course level*, and even with *his design*.
 JOHNSON.

⁶ *When devils will their blackest sins put on,*
They do suggest —] When devils mean to *instigate men* to
 commit the most atrocious crimes. So, in *Hamlet*:

“ Of deaths *put on* by cunning and forc'd cause.”

To *put on*, has already occurred twice in the present play, in this
 sense. To *suggest* in old language is to *tempt*.

See Vol. III. p. 220, n. 4. MALONE.

⁷ *I'll pour this pestilence* —] Pestilence, for poison.

WARBURTON.

⁸ *That she repeals him* —] That is, recalls him. JOHNSON.

⁹ *That shall enmesh them all.*] A metaphor from taking birds
 in meshes. POPE.

Why not from the taking fish, for which purpose nets are more
 frequently used? M. MASON.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 501

exceedingly well cudgell'd; and, I think, the issue will be—I shall have so much experience for my pains: and so, with no money at all, and a little more wit,² return to Venice.

IAGO. How poor are they, that have not patience!—

What wound did ever heal, but by degrees?

Thou know'st, we work by wit, and not by witchcraft;

And wit depends on dilatory time.

Does't not go well? Cassio hath beaten thee,

And thou, by that small hurt, hast cashier'd Cassio:

Though other things grow fair against the sun,

Yet fruits, that blossom first, will first be ripe:³

Content thyself a while.—By the mass, 'tis morning;⁴

² — *a little more wit,*] Thus the folio. The first quarto reads — *and with that wit.* STEEVENS.

³ *Though other things grow fair against the sun, Yet fruits, that blossom first, will first be ripe:*] Of many different things, all planned with the same art, and promoted with the same diligence, some must succeed sooner than others, by the order of nature. Every thing cannot be done at once; we must proceed by the necessary gradation. We are not to *despair* of slow events any more than of tardy fruits, while the causes are in regular progress, and the fruits *grow fair against the sun.* Sir Thomas Hanmer has not, I think, rightly conceived the sentiment; for he reads:

Those fruits which blossom first, *are not first* ripe.

I have therefore drawn it out at length, for there are few to whom that will be easy which was difficult to Sir Thomas Hanmer.

JOHNSON.

The *blossoming*, or fair appearance of things, to which Iago alludes, is, the removal of Cassio. As their plan had already *blossomed*, so there was good ground for expecting that it would *soon* be ripe. Iago does not, I think, mean to compare *their* scheme to *tardy* fruits, as Dr. Johnson seems to have supposed. MALONE.

⁴ — By the mass, *'tis morning;*] Here we have one of the numerous arbitrary alterations made by the Master of the Revels in the

ACT III. SCENE I.

Before the Castle.

Enter CASSIO, and some Musicians.

CAS. Masters, play here, I will content your
pains,
Something that's brief; and bid—good-morrow,
general.⁷ [Musick.

Enter Clown.

CLO. Why, masters, have your instruments been
at Naples, that they speak i'the nose thus?⁸

I. MUS. How, sir, how!

CLO. Are these, I pray you, call'd wind instruments?

I. MUS. Ay, marry, are they, sir.

CLO. O, thereby hangs a tail.

I. MUS. Whereby hangs a tale, sir?

⁷ ——— and bid—good-morrow, general.] It is the usual practice of the *waits*, or nocturnal minstrels, in several towns in the North of England, after playing a tune or two, to cry "Good-morrow, maister such a one, good-morrow dame," adding the hour, and state of the weather. It should seem to have prevailed at Stratford-upon-Avon. They formerly used *bautboys*, which are the wind-instruments here meant. RITSON.

⁸ *Why, masters, have your instruments been at Naples, that they speak i'the nose thus?*] So, in *The Merchant of Venice*:

"And others, when the bagpipe sings i'the nose,—"

STEEVENS.

The venereal disease first appeared at the siege of Naples.

JOHNSON.

CLO. Marry, fir, by many a wind instrument that I know. But, masters, here's money for you: and the general so likes your musick, that he desires you, of all loves,⁹ to make no more noise with it.

I. MUS. Well, fir, we will not.

CLO. If you have any musick that may not be heard, to't again: but, as they say, to hear musick, the general does not greatly care.

I. MUS. We have none such, fir.

CLO. Then put up your pipes in your bag, for I'll away:² Go; vanish into air;³ away.

[*Exeunt Musicians.*]

CAS. Dost thou hear, my honest friend?

CLO. No, I hear not your honest friend; I hear you.

CAS. Pr'ythee, keep up thy quillets.⁴ There's a poor piece of gold for thee: if the gentlewoman that attends the general's wife, be stirring, tell her, there's one Cassio entreats her a little favour of speech: Wilt thou do this?

CLO. She is stirring, fir; if she will stir hither, I shall seem to notify unto her. [*Exit.*]

Enter IAGO.

CAS. Do, good my friend.—In happy time, Iago.

IAGO. You have not been a-bed then?

⁹ — *of all loves,*] The folio reads—*for love's sake.* The phrase in the text occurs also in *The Merry Wives of Windsor.* See Vol. III. p. 380, n. 3. STEEVENS

² — *for I'll away:*] Sir T. Hanmer reads,—*and be away.* JOHNSON.

³ — *vanish into air;*] So, the folio and one of the quartos. The eldest quarto reads—*Vanish away.* STEEVENS.

⁴ — *thy quillets.*] See p. 305, n. 5. MALONE.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 505

CAS. Why, no; the day had broke
Before we parted. I have made bold, Iago,
To send in to your wife: My suit to her
Is, that she will to virtuous Desdemona
Procure me some access.

IAGO. I'll send her to you presently;
And I'll devise a mean to draw the Moor
Out of the way, that your converse and business
May be more free. [Exit.

CAS. I humbly thank you for't. I never knew
A Florentine more kind and honest.⁵

Enter EMILIA.

EMIL. Good morrow, good lieutenant: I am sorry
For your displeasure;⁶ but all will soon be well.
The general, and his wife, are talking of it;
And she speaks for you stoutly: The Moor replies,
That he, you hurt, is of great fame in Cyprus,
And great affinity; and that, in wholesome wisdom,

⁵ — I never knew

A Florentine more kind and honest.] In consequence of this line, a doubt has been entertained concerning the country of Iago. Cassio was undoubtedly a Florentine, as appears by the first scene of the play, where he is expressly called one. That Iago was a Venetian, is proved by a speech in the third scene of this act, and by what he says in the fifth act, after having stabbed Roderigo:

"Iago. Alas, my dear friend and countryman, Roderigo!

"Gra. What, of Venice?

"Iago. Yes."

All that Cassio means to say in the passage before us is, I never experienced more honesty and kindness even in one of my own countrymen, than in this man.

Mr. Steevens has made the same observation in another place.

MALONE.

It was made in edit. 1778. STEEVENS.

⁶ For your displeasure;] i. e. the displeasure you have incurred from Othello. STEEVENS.

He might not but refuse you: but, he protests, he
loves you;

And needs no other suitor, but his likings,
To take the saf'st occasion by the front,⁶
To bring you in again.

CAS. Yet, I beseech you,—
If you think fit, or that it may be done,—
Give me advantage of some brief discourse
With Desdemona alone.

EMIL. Pray you, come in;
I will bestow you where you shall have time
To speak your bosom freely.

CAS. I am much bound to you.⁷
[*Exeunt.*]

S C E N E II.

A Room in the Castle.

Enter OTHELLO, IAGO, and Gentlemen.

OTH. These letters give, Iago, to the pilot;
And, by him, do my duties to the state:⁸
That done, I will be walking on the works,
Repair there to me.

IAGO. Well, my good lord, I'll do't.

OTH. This fortification, gentlemen,—shall we
see't?

GENT. We'll wait upon your lordship. [*Exeunt.*]

⁶ *To take the saf'st occasion by the front,]* This line is wanting in the folio. STEEVENS.

⁷ *I am much bound to you.]* This speech is omitted in the first quarto. STEEVENS.

⁸ *—to the state:]* Thus the quarto, 1622. Folio,—to the senate. MALONE.

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SCENE III.

Before the Castle.

Enter DESDEMONA, CASSIO, and EMILIA.

DES. Be thou assur'd, good Cassio, I will do
All my abilities in thy behalf.

EMIL. Good madam, do; I know it grieves my
husband,
As if the case were his.⁹

DES. O, that's an honest fellow.—Do not doubt,
Cassio,
But I will have my lord and you again
As friendly as you were.

CAS. Bounteous madam,
Whatever shall become of Michael Cassio,
He's never any thing but your true servant.

DES. O, fir, I thank you:² You do love my lord;
You have known him long; and be you well assur'd,
He shall in strangeness stand no further off
Than in a politick distance.

CAS. Ay, but lady,
That policy may either last so long,³
Or feed upon such nice and waterish diet,
Or breed itself so out of circumstance,

⁹ *As if the case were his.*] The folio reads,—As if the *cause* were his. STEEVENS.

² O, fir, *I thank you.*] Thus the quarto, 1622. The folio reads—*I know't*, I thank you. MALONE.

³ *That policy may either last so long.*] He may either of himself think it politick to keep me out of office so long, or he may be satisfied with such slight reasons, or so many accidents may make him think my re-admission at that time improper, that I may be quite forgotten. JOHNSON.

That, I being absent, and my place supplied,
My general will forget my love and service.

DES. Do not doubt that; before Emilia here,
I give thee warrant of thy place: assure thee,
If I do vow a friendship, I'll perform it
To the last article: my lord shall never rest;
I'll watch him tame,⁴ and talk him out of patience;
His bed shall seem a school, his board a shrift;
I'll intermingle every thing he does
With Cassio's suit: Therefore be merry, Cassio;
For thy solicitor shall rather die,
Than give thy cause away.

Enter OTHELLO and IAGO, at a distance.

EMIL. Madam, here comes
My lord.

CAS. Madam, I'll take my leave.

DES. Why, stay,
And hear me speak.

CAS. Madam, not now; I am very ill at ease,

⁴ *I'll watch him tame,*] It is said, that the ferocity of beasts, insuperable and irreclaimable by any other means, is subdued by keeping them from sleep. JOHNSON.

Hawks and other birds are tamed by keeping them from sleep, and it is to the management of these that Shakspeare alludes. So, in Cartwright's *Lady Errant*:

"—— we'll keep you,

"As they do hawks, *watching* untill you leave

"Your wildness."

Again, in *Monsieur D'Olive*, 1606: "—— your only way to deal with women and parrots, is to *keep them awaking*."

Again, in Sir W. D'Avenant's *Just Italian*, 1630:

"They've watch'd my hardy violence so *tame*."

Again, in *The Booke of Hawkyng, Huntynge, &c.* bl. l. no date: "*Wake* her all nyght, and on the morrowe all daye, and then she will be previ enough to be reclaymed." STEEVENS.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 509

Unfit for mine own purposes.

DES. Well, well,⁴

Do your discretion. [Exit CASSIO.]

IAGO. Ha! I like not that.

OTH. What dost thou say?

IAGO. Nothing, my lord: or if—I know not what.

OTH. Was not that Cassio, parted from my wife?

IAGO. Cassio, my lord? No, sure, I cannot think it,

That he would steal away so guilty-like,
Seeing you coming.

OTH. I do believe, 'twas he.

DES. How now, my lord?

I have been talking with a suitor here,
A man that languishes in your displeasure.

OTH. Who is't, you mean?

DES. Why, your lieutenant Cassio. Good my lord,
If I have any grace, or power to move you,
His present reconciliation take;⁵
For, if he be not one that truly loves you,
That errs in ignorance, and not in cunning,⁶

⁴ *Well, well,*] The adverb—*well*, has been repeated for the sake of measure. STEEVENS.

⁵ *His present reconciliation take;*] Cassio was to be reconciled to his general, not his general to him, therefore *take* cannot be right. We should read—*make*. WARBURTON.

To *take his reconciliation*, may be to accept the submission which he makes in order to be reconciled. JOHNSON.

⁶ — *and not in cunning,*] *Cunning*, for design, or purpose, simply. WARBURTON.

Perhaps rather for *knowledge*, the ancient sense of the word. So, in *Measure for Measure*: “In the boldness of my *cunning* I will lay myself in hazard.” The opposition which seems to have been intended between cunning and ignorance, favours this interpretation.

MALONE.

I have no judgement in an honest face:
I pr'ythee, call him back.

OTH. Went he hence now?

DES. Ay, sooth; so humbled.
That he hath left part of his grief with me;
I suffer with him.⁶ Good love, call him back.

OTH. Not now, sweet Desdemona; some other
time.

DES. But shall't be shortly?

OTH. The sooner, sweet, for you.

DES. Shall't be to-night at supper?

OTH. No, not to-night.

DES. To-morrow dinner then?

OTH. I shall not dine at home;
I meet the captains at the citadel.

DES. Why then, to-morrow night; or tuesday
morn;

Or tuesday noon, or night; or wednesday morn;—
I pray thee, name the time; but let it not
Exceed three days: in faith, he's penitent;
And yet his trespass, in our common reason,
(Save that, they say, the wars must make examples
Out of their best,⁷) is not almost a fault
To incur a private check: When shall he come?
Tell me, Othello. I wonder in my soul,
What you could ask me, that I should deny,

⁶ *I suffer with him.*] Thus the quarto, 1622. The folio reads—
To suffer with him. MALONE.

⁷ — *the wars must make examples*

Out of their best,] The severity of military discipline must not
spare the *best men* of the army, when their punishment may afford a
wholesome *example*. JOHNSON.

The old copies read—*her best*. Mr. Rowe made this necessary
emendation. MALONE.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 511

Or stand so mammering on.⁸ What! Michael Cassio,
That came a wooing with you;⁹ and many a time,²
When I have spoke of you dispraisingly,
Hath ta'en your part; to have so much to do
To bring him in! Trust me, I could do much,—

OTH. Pr'ythee, no more: let him come when he
will;

I will deny thee nothing.

DES. Why, this is not a boon;
'Tis as I should entreat you wear your gloves,
Or feed on nourishing dishes, or keep you warm;
Or sue to you to do peculiar profit
To your own person: Nay, when I have a suit,
Wherein I mean to touch your love indeed,

⁸ — *so* mammering on.] To hesitate, to stand in suspense.
The word often occurs in old English writings, and probably takes
its original from the French *M'Amour*, which men were apt often
to repeat when they were not prepared to give a direct answer.

HANMER.

I find the same word in *Acolastus*, a comedy, 1540: "I stand
in doubt, or in a *mamorynge* between hope and fear."

Again, in Thomas Drant's translation of the third satire of the
second book of *Horace*, 1567:

"Yea, when she daynes to send for him, then *mameryng*
he doth doute." STEEVENS.

Again, in Lyly's *Euphues*, 1580: "—neither *stand in a mamering*
whether it be best to depart or not." The quarto, 1622,
reads—*muttering*. *Mammering* is the reading of the folio.

MALONE.

⁹ — *What!* Michael Cassio,

That came a wooing with you;] And yet in the first act Cassio
appears perfectly ignorant of the amour, and is indebted to Iago
for the information of Othello's marriage, and of the person to
whom he is married. STEEVENS.

See the notes on the passage alluded to, p. 404, n. 5.

MALONE.

² — *many a time,*] Old copies, redundantly, and without the
least improvement of the sense,—*so* many a time. The compositor
had accidentally repeated—*so*, from the preceding line.

STEEVENS.

It shall be full of poize² and difficulty,
And fearful to be granted.

OTH. I will deny thee nothing:
Whereon, I do beseech thee, grant me this,
To leave me but a little to myself.

DES. Shall I deny you? no: Farewell, my lord.

OTH. Farewell, my Desdemona: I will come to
thee straight.

DES. Emilia, come:—Be it as your fancies teach
you;
Whate'er you be, I am obedient.

[Exit, with EMILIA.]

OTH. Excellent wretch! Perdition catch my soul,
But I do love thee!³ and when I love thee not,
Chaos is come again.⁴

² — full of poize —] i. e. of weight. So, in *The Dumb Knight*, 1633:

“ They are of poize sufficient —.”

Again:

“ But we are all prest down with other poize.”

STEEVENS.

³ *Excellent wretch!—Perdition catch my soul,
But I do love thee! &c.*] The meaning of the word *wretch*, is not generally understood. It is now, in some parts of England, a term of the softest and fondest tenderness. It expresses the utmost degree of amiableness, joined with an idea, which perhaps all tenderness includes, of feebleness, softness, and want of protection. Othello, considering Desdemona as excelling in beauty and virtue, soft and timorous by her sex, and by her situation absolutely in his power, calls her, *Excellent wretch!* It may be expressed:

Dear, harmless, helpless excellence. JOHNSON.

Sir W. D'Avenant uses the same expression in his *Cruel Brother*, 1630, and with the same meaning. It occurs twice: “ *Excellent wretch!* with a timorous modesty she stifles up her utterance.”

STEEVENS.

⁴ — when I love thee not,

Chaos is come again.] When my love is for a moment suspended by suspicion, I have nothing in my mind but discord, tumult, perturbation, and confusion. JOHNSON.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 513

IAGO. My noble lord,—

OTH. What dost thou say, Iago?

IAGO. Did Michael Cassio, when you woo'd my lady,

Know of your love?

OTH. He did, from first to last: Why dost thou ask?

IAGO. But for a satisfaction of my thought;
No further harm.

OTH. Why of thy thought, Iago?

IAGO. I did not think, he had been acquainted
with her.

OTH. O, yes; and went between us very oft.

— *when I love thee not,*

Chaos is come again.] There is another meaning possible. *When I cease to love thee, the world is at an end*; i. e. there remains nothing valuable or important. The first explanation may be more elegant, the second is perhaps more easy. Shakspeare has the same thought in his *Venus and Adonis*:

“ For he being dead, with him is beauty slain,

“ And, beauty dead, black *Chaos comes again.*”

STEEVENS.

This passage does not strike me in the same light in which it appeared to Dr. Johnson; as Othello had not yet any experience of that perturbation and discord, by which he afterwards is so fatally agitated. He means, I think, to say,—*and ere I cease to love thee, the world itself shall be reduced to its primitive chaos.* Shakspeare probably preferred—“ *chaos is come again,*” to “ *chaos shall come again,*” as more bold and expressive. *Muretus*, a poet of the 16th century, has exactly the same thought:

“ Tune meo elabi possis de pectore, Lacci,

“ Aut ego, dum vivam, non meminisse tui?

“ Ante, vel istius mundi compage soluta,

“ *Tetras in antiquum fit reditura Chaos.*”

The meaning of Shakspeare appears very clearly from the following passage in *The Winter's Tale*, where the same thought is more fully expressed:

“ It cannot fail, but by

“ The violation of my faith,—and then

“ Let nature crush the sides o' the earth together,

“ And mar the seeds within!” MALONE.

IAGO. Indeed?

OTH. Indeed! ay, indeed:—Discern'st thou aught
in that?³

Is he not honest?

IAGO. Honest, my lord?

OTH. Ay, honest.⁴

IAGO. My lord, for aught I know.

OTH. What dost thou think?

IAGO. Think, my lord?

OTH. Think, my lord!

By heaven, he echoes me,
As if there were some monster in his thought
Too hideous to be shown.⁵—Thou dost mean some-
thing:

I heard thee say but now,—Thou lik'dst not that,
When Cassio left my wife; What did'st not like?
And, when I told thee—he was of my counsel

³ *Iago. Indeed?*

Oth. Indeed! ay, indeed: &c.] I cannot help supposing that this passage is interpolated, and originally stood thus:

Iago. Indeed!

Oth. Indeed:—Discern'st thou ought in that?

See the next note. STEEVENS.

⁴ *Ay, honest.]* The old copies, violating the measure, read:

Honest? ay, honest.

It appears from many instances, that where words were to be repeated at all, our old blundering printers continued the repetition beyond propriety. Mr. Malone has elsewhere the same remark.

STEEVENS.

⁵ *By heaven, he echoes me,*

As if there were some monster in his thoughts &c.] Thus the eldest quarto. The second quarto reads:

— Why dost thou echo me,

As if there were some monster in thy thought, &c.

The folio reads:

— Alas, thou echo'st me,

As if &c.— STEEVENS.

This is one of the numerous alterations made in the folio copy by the Licenser. MALONE.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 515

In my whole course of wooing, thou cry'dst, *Indeed?*
And did'st contract and purse thy brow together,
As if thou then had'st shut up in thy brain
Some horrible conceit: If thou dost love me,
Show me thy thought.

IAGO. My lord, you know I love you.

OTH. I think, thou dost;
And,—for I know thou art full of love and honesty,
And weigh'st thy words before thou giv'st them
breath,—

Therefore these stops of thine fright me the more:
For such things, in a false disloyal knave,
Are tricks of custom; but, in a man that's just,
They are close denotements, working from the heart,
That passion cannot rule.⁶

⁶ *They are close denotements, working from the heart,*

That passion cannot rule.] Thus the earliest quarto. But let Dr. Warburton be heard in defence of "*cold dilations*," the reading of the second folio.

I should willingly, however, have adopted an emendation proposed by Dr. Johnson in the subsequent note, could I have discovered that the word—*delation* was ever used in its Roman sense of—*accusation*, during the time of Shakspeare. Bacon frequently employs it, but always to signify *carriage* or *conveyance*. STEEVENS.

These stops and breaks are *cold dilations*, or cold keeping back a secret, which men of phlegmatick constitutions, whose hearts are not swayed or governed by their passions, we find, can do: while more sanguine tempers reveal themselves at once, and without reserve. WARBURTON.

The old copies give,—*dilations*, except that the earlier quarto has—*denotements*; which was the author's first expression, afterwards changed by him, not to *dilations*, but to *delations*; to *occult* and *secret accusations*, *working* involuntarily *from the heart*, which, though resolved to conceal the fault, cannot rule its *passion* of resentment. JOHNSON.

They are close denotements, &c.] i. e. indications, or discoveries, not openly revealed, but involuntarily working from the heart, which cannot rule and suppress its feelings.

The folio reads—They are close *dilations*; but nothing is got by the change, for *dilations* was undoubtedly used in the sense of

IAGO. For Michael Cassio,—
I dare be sworn, I think that he is honest.

OTH. I think so too.

IAGO. Men should be what they seem;
Or, those that be not, 'would they might seem none!⁶

OTH. Certain, men should be what they seem.

IAGO. Why then,
I think that Cassio⁷ is an honest man.

OTH. Nay, yet there's more in this:
I pray thee, speak to me as to thy thinkings,
As thou dost ruminate; and givethy worst of thoughts
The worst of words.

IAGO. Good my lord, pardon me;
Though I am bound to every act of duty,
I am not bound to that all slaves are free to.⁸

dilutements, or large and full expositions. See Minshew's Dict. 1617:
"To dilate or make large."

Dilatement is used in the sense of *dilation* by Lodge, our poet's contemporary: "After all this foul weather follows a calm *dilatement* of others too forward harmfulness." *Rosalynde, or Euphues Golden Legacie*, 4to. 1592."

Dr. Johnson very elegantly reads—They are close *dclations*.

But the objection to this conjectural reading is, that there is strong ground for believing that the word was not used in Shakespeare's age. It is not found in any dictionary of the time, that I have seen, nor has any passage been quoted in support of it. On the contrary, we find in Minshew the verb, "To *delate*," not signifying, to *accuse*, but thus interpreted: "to *speak at large* of any thing, vid. to *dilate*:" so that if even *dclations* were the word of the old copy, it would mean no more than *dilations*. To the reading of the quarto no reasonable objection can be made. MALONE.

⁶ Or, *those that be not, 'would they might seem none!*] I believe the meaning is, 'would they might no longer seem, or bear the shape of men. JOHNSON.

May not the meaning be, 'Would they might not seem *honest!*

MALONE.

⁷ —that *Cassio*—] For the sake of measure, I have ventured to insert the pronoun—*that*. STEEVENS.

⁸ —to that all slaves are free to.] I am not bound to do that, which even slaves are not bound to do. MALONE.

Utter my thoughts? Why, say, they are vile and false,—

As where's that palace, whereinto foul things
Sometimes intrude not? ⁹ who has a breast so pure,
But some uncleanly apprehensions
Keep leets, and law-days, and in session sit
With meditations lawful? ²

OTH. Thou dost conspire against thy friend, Iago,
If thou but think'st him wrong'd, and mak'st his ear
A stranger to thy thoughts.

⁹ — *where's that palace, whereinto foul things
Sometimes intrude not?* So, in *The Rape of Lucrece*:
“ — no perfection is so absolute,
“ That some impurity doth not pollute.” MALONE.

² — *who has a breast so pure,
But some uncleanly apprehensions
Keep leets, and law-days, and in session sit
With meditations lawful?* Leets, and law-days, are synonymous terms: “ Leet (says Jacob, in his *Law Dictionary*) is otherwise called a *law-day*.” They are there explained to be courts, or meetings of the hundred, “ to certify the king of the good manners, and government, of the inhabitants,” and to enquire of all offences that are not capital. The poet's meaning will now be plain. *Who has a breast so little apt to form ill opinions of others, but that foul suspicions will sometimes mix with his fairest and most candid thoughts, and erect a court in his mind, to enquire of the offences apprehended.*

STEEVENS.

Who has so virtuous a breast, that some uncharitable surmizes and impure conceptions will not sometimes enter into it; hold a session there as in a regular court, and “ bench by the side” of authorized and lawful thoughts?—In our poet's 30th Sonnet we find the same imagery:

“ When to the sessions of sweet silent thought

“ I summon up remembrance of things past.”

“ A leet,” says Bullokar, in his *English Expofitor*, 1616: “ is a court or law-day, holden commonly every half year.” To keep a leet was the *verbum juris*; the title of one of the chapters in Kitchin's book on Courts, being, “ The manner of keeping a court-leet.” The leet, according to Lambard, was a court or jurisdiction above the wapentake or hundred, comprehending three or four hundreds. The jurisdiction of this court is now in most places merged in that of the County Court. MALONE.

IAGO. I do beseech you,—
Though I, perchance, am vicious in my guesses,³

³ *I do beseech you,—*

Though I, perchance, am vicious in my guesses,] Not to mention that, in this reading, the sentence is abrupt and broken, it is likewise highly absurd. I beseech you give yourself no uneasiness from my unsure observance, *though* I am vicious in my guesses. For his being an ill guesser was a reason why Othello should not be uneasy: in propriety, therefore, it should either have been, *though I am not vicious*, or *because I am vicious*. It appears then we should read:

I do beseech you,

Think, I, perchance, am vicious in my guesses.

Which makes the sense pertinent and perfect. *WARBURTON.*

That abruptness in the speech which Dr. Warburton complains of, and would alter, may be easily accounted for. Iago seems desirous by this ambiguous hint, *Though I*—to inflame the jealousy of Othello, which he knew would be more effectually done in this manner, than by any expression that bore a determinate meaning. The jealous Othello would fill up the pause in the speech, which Iago turns off at last to another purpose, and find a more certain cause of discontent, and a greater degree of torture arising from the doubtful consideration how it might have concluded, than he could have experienced had the whole of what he enquired after been reported to him with every circumstance of aggravation.

We may suppose him imagining to himself, that Iago mentally continued the thought thus, *Though I—know more than I choose to speak of.*

Vicious in my guesses does not mean that he is an *ill-guesser*, but that he is apt to put the worst construction on every thing he attempts to account for.

Out of respect for the subsequent opinions of Mr. Henley and Mr. Malone, I have altered my former regulation of this passage; though I am not quite convinced that any change was needful.

STEEVENS.

I believe nothing is here wanting, but to regulate the punctuation:

Iago. I do beseech you —

Though I, perchance, am vicious in my guesses,

As, I confess, it is my nature's plague

To spy into abuses; and, oft, my jealousy

Shapes faults that are not,— &c. *HENLEY.*

The reader should be informed, that the mark of abruptness which I have placed after the word *you*, was placed by Mr. Steevens after the word *perchance*: and his note, to which I do not subscribe, is founded on that regulation. I think the poet intended

As, I confess, it is my nature's plague
To spy into abuses; and, oft, my jealousy
Shapes faults that are not,—I entreat you then,⁴
From one that so imperfectly conceits,
You'd take no notice; nor build yourself a trouble
Out of his scattering and unsure observance:—
It were not for your quiet, nor your good,
Nor for my manhood, honesty, or wisdom,
To let you know my thoughts.

OTH. What dost thou mean?

IAGO. Good name, in man, and woman, dear my
lord,
Is the immediate jewel of their souls:

that Iago should break off at the end of the first hemistich, as well as in the middle of the fifth line. What he would have added, it is not necessary very nicely to examine.

The adverbative particle, *though*, in the second line, does not indeed appear very proper; but in an abrupt and studiously clouded sentence like the present, where more is meant to be conveyed than meets the ear, strict propriety may well be dispensed with. The word *perchance*, if strongly marked in speaking, would sufficiently shew that the speaker did not suppose himself *vicious in his guess*.

By the latter words, Iago, I apprehend, means only, "though I perhaps am mistaken, led into an error by my natural disposition, which is apt to shape faults that have no existence."

MALONE.

⁴ — *I entreat you then, &c.*] Thus the quarto, 1622. The folio reads:

—— and of, my jealousy
Shapes faults that are not) that your wisdom
From one that so imperfectly conceits,
Would take no notice. MALONE.

To *conject*, i. e. to *conjecture*, is a verb used by other writers. So, in *Acolastus*, a comedy, 1540:

"Now reason I, or *conject* with myself."

Again:

"I cannot forget thy saying, or thy *conjecting* words."

STEEVENS.

Who steals my purse, steals trash; 'tis something,
nothing;⁵

'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thou-
sands;

But he, that filches from me my good name,
Robs me of that, which not enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed.

Oth. By heaven, I'll know thy thought.

Iago. You cannot, if my heart were in your
hand;

Nor shall not, whilst 'tis in my custody.

Oth. Ha!

Iago. O, beware, my lord, of jealousy;
It is the green-ey'd monster, which doth mock
The meat it feeds on:⁶ That cuckold lives in bliss,

⁵ Good name, in man, and woman, dear my lord,

Is the immediate jewel of their souls:

Who steals my purse, steals trash; &c.] The sacred writings were here perhaps in our poet's thoughts: "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour than silver and gold." *Proverbs*, ch. xxii. v. 1. MALONE.

⁶ ——— *which doth mock*

The meat it feeds on:] i. e. loaths that which nourishes and sustains it. This being a miserable state, Iago bids him beware of it. The Oxford editor reads:

———— *which doth make*

The meat it feeds on:

Implying that its suspicions are unreal and groundless, which is the very contrary to what he would here make his general think, as appears from what follows:

———— *That cuckold lives in bliss, &c.*

In a word, the villain is for fixing him jealous: and therefore bids him beware of jealousy, not that it was an *unreasonable*, but a *miserable* state; and this plunges him into it, as we see by his reply, which is only,

"O misery!" WARBURTON.

I have received Hanmer's emendation; because *to mock*, does not signify *to loath*; and because, when Iago bids Othello *beware*

Who, certain of his fate, loves not his wronger;

of jealousy, the green-ey'd monster, it is natural to tell why he should beware, and for caution he gives him two reasons, that jealousy often creates its own cause, and that, when the causes are real, jealousy is misery. JOHNSON.

In this place, and some others, to *mock* seems the same with to *mammoth*. FARMER.

If Shakspeare had written—a green-ey'd monster, we might have supposed him to refer to some creature existing only in his particular imagination; but *the green-ey'd monster* seems to have reference to an object as familiar to his readers as to himself.

It is known that the *tiger* kind have *green-eyes*, and always play with the victim to their hunger, before they devour it. So, in our author's *Tarquin and Lucrece*:

“ Like foul night-waking cat, he doth but dally,

“ While in his hold-fast foot the weak mouse panteth;—.”

Thus, a jealous husband, who discovers no certain cause why he may be divorced, continues to sport with the woman whom he suspects, and, on more certain evidence, determines to punish. There is no beast that can be literally said to *make* its own food, and therefore I am unwilling to receive the emendation of Sir T. Hanmer, especially as I flatter myself that a glimpse of meaning may be produced from the old reading.

One of the ancient senses of the verb—to *mock*, is to *amuse*, to play with. Thus, in *A Discourse of Gentlemen lying in London that were better keep House at home in their Country*, 1593:

“ A fine deuise to keepe poore Kate in health,

“ A pretty toy to *mock* an ape withal.”

i. e. a pretty toy to *divert* an ape, for an ape to *divert* himself with. The same phrase occurs in *Marston's Satires*, the ninth of the third book being intitled “ — Here's a toy to *mock* an ape,” &c. i. e. afford an ape materials for *sport*, furnish him with a plaything, though perhaps at his own expence, as the phrase may in this instance be ironically used.

In *Antony and Cleopatra*, the contested word—*mock*, occurs again:

“ ——— tell him

“ He *mocks* the pauses that he makes.”

i. e. he plays wantonly with those intervals of time which he should improve to his own preservation.

Should such an explanation be admissible, the advice given by Iago will amount to this:—*Beware, my lord, of yielding to a passion which as yet has no proofs to justify its excess. Think how the interval between suspicion and certainty must be filled. Though you doubt her fidelity, you cannot yet refuse her your bed, or drive her from*

But, O, what damned minutes tells he o'er,

your heart; but, like the capricious savage, must continue to sport with one whom you wait for an opportunity to destroy.

A similar idea occurs in *All's well that ends well*:

" ————— so lust doth play

" With what it loaths."

Such is the only sense I am able to draw from the original text. What I have said, may be liable to some objections, but I have nothing better to propose. That jealousy is a *monster* which often creates the suspicions on which it feeds, may be well admitted according to Sir T. Hanmer's proposition; but is it *the* monster? (i. e. a well-known and conspicuous animal) or whence has it *green eyes*? *Yellow* is the colour which Shakspeare usually appropriates to jealousy. It must be acknowledged, that he afterwards characterises it as

" ————— a monster,

" Begot upon itself, born on itself."

but yet

" What damned minutes tells he o'er," &c.

is the best illustration of my attempt to explain the passage. To produce Sir T. Hanmer's meaning, a change in the text is necessary. I am counsel for the old reading. STEEVENS.

It is so difficult, if not impossible, to extract any sense from this passage as it stands, even by the most forced construction of it, and the slight amendment proposed by Hanmer, renders it so clear, elegant, and poetical, that I am surprized the editors should hesitate in adopting it, and still more surprized they should reject it. As for Steevens's objection, that the definite article is used, not the indefinite, he surely need not be told in the very last of these plays, that Shakspeare did not regard such minute inaccuracies, which may be found in every play he wrote.

When Steevens compares the jealous man, who continues to sport with the woman he suspects, and is determined to destroy, to the tiger who plays with the victim of his hunger, he forgets that the meat on which jealousy is supposed to feed, is not the woman who is the object of it, but the several circumstances of suspicion which jealousy itself creates, and which cause and nourish it. So Emilia, at the end of the third act in answer to Desdemona, who, speaking of Othello's jealousy, says,

" Alas the day! I never gave him cause;"

replies,

" But jealous fools will not be answer'd so,

" They are not jealous ever for the cause,

" But jealous, for they are jealous; 'tis a monster

" Begot upon itself, born on itself."

Who dotes, yet doubts; suspects, yet strongly loves!'

This passage is a strong confirmation of Hanmer's reading.

The same idea occurs in Massinger's *Picture*, where Matthias, speaking of the groundless jealousy he entertained of Sophia's possible inconstancy, says,

" — but why should I nourish
 " A fury here, and with *imagin'd food*,
 " Holding no real ground on which to raise
 " A building of suspicion she was ever,
 " Or can be false?"

Imagin'd food, is food created by imagination, the food that jealousy makes and feeds on. M. MASON.

In order to make way for one alteration, Mr. M. Mason is forced to foist in another; or else poor Shakspeare must be arraigned for a blunder of which he is totally guiltless. This gentleman's objections both to the text in its present state, and to Mr. Steevens's most happy illustration of it, originate entirely in his own misconception, and a jumble of figurative with literal expressions. To have been consistent with himself he should have charged Mr. Steevens with maintaining, that it was the property of a jealous husband, first to *mock* his wife, and afterwards to *eat* her.

In Act V. the word *mocks* occurs in a sense somewhat similar to that in the passage before us:

" *Æmil.* O mistress, villainy hath made *mocks* with love!—"

HENLEY.

I think myself particularly indebted to Mr. Henley for the support he has given to my sentiments concerning this difficult passage; and shall place more confidence in them since they have been found to deserve his approbation, a circumstance in which I have not always proved so fortunate. STEEVENS.

I have not the smallest doubt that Shakspeare wrote *make*, and have therefore inserted it in my text. The words *make* and *mocke* (for such was the old spelling) are often confounded in these plays, and I have assigned the reason in a note on *Measure for Measure*, Vol. IV. p. 209, n. 6.

Mr. Steevens in his paraphrase on this passage interprets the word *mock* by *sport*; but in what poet or prose-writer, from Chaucer and Mandeville to this day, does the verb *to mock* signify to *sport with*? In the passage from *Antony and Cleopatra*, I have proved, I think incontestably, from the metre, and from our poet's usage of this verb in other places, (in which it is followed by a personal pronoun,) that Shakspeare must have written—

" Being so frustrate, tell him, he mocks *us* by
 " The pauses that he makes."

See Vol. XII. p. 644, n. 4.

ΟΤΗ. O misery!

Besides; is it true as a general position, that jealousy (*as jealousy sports or plays with* the object of love (allowing this not very delicate interpretation of the words, *the meat it feeds on*, to be the true one)? The position certainly is not true. It is *Love*, not *Jealousy*, that sports with the object of its passion; nor can those circumstances which create suspicion, and which are *the meat it feeds on*, with any propriety be called the *food* of LOVE, when the poet has clearly pointed them out as the food or cause of JEALOUSY; giving it not only being, but nutriment.

"There is no beast," it is urged, "that can *literally* be said to make its own food." It is indeed acknowledged, that jealousy is a monster which often *creates* the suspicions on which it feeds, but is it, we are asked, "*the monster*?" (i. e. a *well-known and conspicuous animal*;) and whence has it *green eyes*? *Yellow* is the colour which Shakspeare appropriates to jealousy."

To this I answer, that *yellow* is not the only colour which Shakspeare appropriates to jealousy, for we have in *The Merchant of Venice*:

"—— shuddering fear, and *green-ey'd jealousy*."

and I suppose, it will not be contended that he was *there* thinking of any of the tiger kind.

If our poet had written only—"It is *the green-ey'd monster*; beware of it;" the other objection would hold good, and some particular monster, *κατ' εἶδος*, must have been meant; but the words, "It is *the green-ey'd monster*, which doth, &c. in my apprehension have precisely the same meaning, as if the poet had written, "it is *that green-ey'd monster*, which," &c. or, "it is *a green-ey'd monster*." He is *the man* in the world *whom* I would least wish to meet,—is the common phraseology of the present day.

When Othello says to Iago in a former passage, "By heaven, he echoes me, as if there were some *monster* in his thought," does any one imagine that any *animal* whatever was meant?

The passage in a subsequent scene, to which Mr. Steevens has alluded, strongly supports the emendation which has been made:

"—— *jealousy* will not be answer'd so;

"They are not ever jealous for the cause,

"But jealous, for they are jealous; 'tis a *monster*,

"*Begot upon itself, born on itself*."

It is, *strictly* speaking, as false that any monster can be *begot*, or *born*, on itself, as it is, that any monster (whatever may be the colour of its eyes, whether green or yellow) can *make* its own food; but, poetically, both are equally true of that monster, JEALOUSY. Mr. Steevens seems to have been aware of this, and therefore has added the word *literally*: "No monster can be *literally* said to make its own food."

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 525

IAGO. Poor, and content, is rich, and rich enough;¹
But riches, fineless,² is as poor as winter,³
To him that ever fears he shall be poor:—
Good heaven, the souls of all my tribe defend
From jealousy!

It should always be remembered, that Shakspeare's allusions scarcely ever answer precisely on both sides; nor had he any care upon this subject. Though he has introduced the word *monster*,—when he talk'd of its *making its own food*, and being *begot by itself*, he was still thinking of jealousy *only*, careless whether there was any animal in the world that would correspond with his description.

That by the words, *the meat it feeds on*, is meant, not *Desdemona* herself, as has been maintained, but *pabulum zelotypiæ*, may be likewise inferred from a preceding passage in which a kindred imagery is found:

“ That *policy* may either last so long,
“ Or *feed* upon such nice and waterish *diet*,” &c.

And this obvious interpretation is still more strongly confirmed by Daniel's *Rosamond*, 1592, a poem which Shakspeare had diligently read, and has more than once imitated in *Romeo and Juliet*:

“ O *Jealousy*,———
“ *Feeding* upon *suspect* that doth *renew* thee,
“ Happy were lovers, if they never knew thee.”

In this and the few other places in which I have ventured to depart from the ancient copies, I have thought it my duty to state in the fullest and clearest manner the grounds on which the emendation stands: which in some cases I have found not easily accomplished, without running into greater prolixity than would otherwise be justifiable. MALONE.

¹ ——— *strongly* loves!] Thus the quarto; the folio—*soundly* loves. STEEVENS.

² Poor, *and* content, *is* rich, *and* rich enough;] So, in *Dorastus and Fawnia*, (the novel on which *The Winter's Tale* is formed,) 1592: “ We are rich, in that we are poor with content.”

MALONE.

The same sentiment, which is sufficiently common, is amplified by Dryden in his *Indian Emperor*:

“ We to ourselves with all our wishes grant;
“ For nothing coveting, we nothing want.” STEEVENS.

³ But riches, *fineless*,] Unbounded, endless, unnumbered treasures. JOHNSON.

² ——— *as poor as winter*,] Finely expressed: *winter* producing no fruits. WARBURTON.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 527

Nor from mine own weak merits will I draw
The smallest fear, or doubt of her revolt;
For she had eyes, and chose me: No, Iago;
I'll see, before I doubt; when I doubt, prove;
And, on the proof, there is no more but this,—
Away at once with love, or jealousy.

IAGO. I am glad of this; for now I shall have
reason

To show the love and duty that I bear you
With franker spirit: therefore, as I am bound,
Receive it from me:—I speak not yet of proof.
Look to your wife; observe her well with Cassio;
Wear your eye—thus, not jealous, nor secure:
I would not have your free and noble nature,
Out of self-bounty, be abus'd;⁶ look to't:
I know our country disposition well;
In Venice⁷ they do let heaven see the pranks
They dare not show their husbands; their best con-
science

I know not why the modern editors, in opposition to the first quarto and folio, read *most* instead of *more*.

A passage in *All's well that ends well*, is perhaps the best comment on the sentiment of Othello: "I have those good hopes of her, education promises: his disposition she inherits; which makes fair gifts fairer." *Gratior e pulchro veniens et corpore virtus*.

STEVENS.

Most is the reading of the second folio. RITSON.

⁶ *Out of self-bounty, be abus'd;*] *Self-bounty* for inherent generosity. WARBURTON.

⁷ — *our country disposition* —

In Venice—] Here Iago seems to be a Venetian.

JOHNSON.

There is nothing in any other part of the play, properly understood, to imply otherwise. HENLEY.

Various other passages, as well as the present, prove him to have been a Venetian, nor is there any ground for doubting the poet's intention on this head. See p. 505, n. 5. MALONE.

Is—not to leave undone, but keep unknown.⁵

OTH. Dost thou say so?

IAGO. She did deceive her father, marrying you;
And, when she seem'd⁶ to shake, and fear your
looks,
She lov'd them most.

OTH. And so she did.

IAGO. Why, go to, then;
She that, so young, could give out such a seeming,
To feel her father's eyes up, close as oak,⁷—

⁵ *Is—not to leave undone, but keep unknown.*] The folio perhaps more clearly reads:

Is not to leav't undone, but keep't unknown. STEEVENS.

The folio, by an evident error of the press, reads—*kept unknown.* MALONE.

⁶ *And, when she seem'd—*] This and the following argument of Iago ought to be deeply impressed on every reader. Deceit and falsehood, whatever conveniences they may for a time promise or produce, are, in the sum of life, obstacles to happiness. Those, who profit by the cheat, distrust the deceiver, and the act, by which kindness is sought, puts an end to confidence.

The same objection may be made with a lower degree of strength against the imprudent generosity of disproportionate marriages. When the first heat of passion is over, it is easily succeeded by suspicion, that the same violence of inclination, which caused one irregularity, may stimulate to another; and those who have shewn, that their passions are too powerful for their prudence, will, with very slight appearances against them, be censured, as not very likely to restrain them by their virtue. JOHNSON.

⁷ *To feel her father's eyes up, close as oak,*] The oak is (I believe) the most close-grained wood of general use in England. *Close as oak*, means, *close as the grain of oak*.

To *feel* is an expression from falconry. So, in Ben Jonson's *Catiline*:

“ ————— would have kept

“ Both eyes and beak *feel'd* up, for six sefterces.”

STEEVENS.

To *feel* a hawk is to sew up his eye-lids. See Vol. XII. p. 667, n. 7.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 529

He thought, 'twas witchcraft :—But I am much to blame ;

I humbly do beseech you of your pardon,
For too much loving you.

OTH. I am bound to thee for ever.

IAGO. I see, this hath a little dash'd your spirits.

OTH. Not a jot, not a jot.

IAGO. Trust me, I fear it has.

I hope, you will consider, what is spoke

Comes from my love ;—But, I do see you are mov'd :—

I am to pray you, not to strain my speech
To grosser issues,⁸ nor to larger reach,
Than to suspicion.

OTH. I will not.

IAGO. Should you do so, my lord,

My speech should fall into such vile success⁹

As my thoughts aim not at. Cassio's my worthy friend :—

In *The Winter's Tale*, Paulina says :

" The root of his opinion, which is rotten

" As ever oak, or stone, was found." MALONE.

⁸ To grosser issues,] *Issues*, for conclusions. WARBURTON.

⁹ My speech should fall into such vile success—] *Success*, for success¹⁰, i. e. conclusion ; not prosperous issue. WARBURTON.

I rather think there is a depravation, and would read :

My speech will fall into such vile excess.

If *success* be the right word, it seems to mean *consequence* or *event*, as *successo* is used in Italian. JOHNSON.

I think *success* may, in this instance, bear its common interpretation. What Iago means seems to be this : " Should you do so, my lord, my words would be attended by such an infamous degree of success, as my thoughts do not even aim at." Iago, who counterfeits the feelings of virtue, might have said *fall into success*, and *vile success*, because he would appear to Othello, to wish that the enquiry into Desdemona's guilt might prove fruitless and unsuccessful. STEEVENS.

My lord, I see you are mov'd.

OTH. No, not much mov'd:—
I do not think, but Desdemona's honest.

IAGO. Long live she so! and long live you to
think so!

OTH. And yet, how nature erring from itself,—

IAGO. Ay, there's the point:—As,—to be bold
with you,—

Not to affect many proposed matches,
Of her own clime, complexion, and degree;
Whereto, we see, in all things nature tends:
Foh! one may smell, in such, a will most rank,^a
Foul disproportion, thoughts unnatural.—
But pardon me; I do not, in position,
Distinctly speak of her: though I may fear,
Her will, recoiling to her better judgement,
May fall to match you with her country forms,
And (hapily) repent.

OTH. Farewell, farewell:
If more thou dost perceive, let me know more;
Set on thy wife to observe: Leave me, Iago.

IAGO. My lord, I take my leave. [*Going.*]

OTH. Why did I marry?—This honest creature,
doubtless,
Sees and knows more, much more, than he unfolds.

IAGO. My lord, I would, I might entreat your
honour

The following passages will perhaps be considered as proofs of
Dr. Johnson's explanation.

"Then the poor desolate women, fearing least their case would
sorte to some pitifull *success*." *Palace of Pleasure*, bl. l.

"God forbyd all hys hope should turne to such *success*."

Promos and Cassandra, 1578. HENDERSON.

^a — a will most rank,] *Will*, is for wilfulness. It is so used
by Ascham. A *rank will*, is *self-will* overgrown and exuberant.

JOHNSON.

To scan this thing no further; leave it to time:
And though it be fit that Cassio have his place,
(For, sure, he fills it up with great ability,)
Yet, if you please to hold him off a while,
You shall by that perceive him and his means:³
Note, if your lady strain his entertainment⁴
With any strong or vehement importunity;
Much will be seen in that. In the mean time,
Let me be thought too busy in my fears,
(As worthy cause I have, to fear—I am,)
And hold her free, I do beseech your honour.

OTH. Fear not my government.⁵

IAGO. I once more take my leave. [Exit.

OTH. This fellow's of exceeding honesty,
And knows all qualities, with a learned spirit,⁶
Of human dealings: If I do prove her haggard,⁷

³ *You shall by that perceive him and his means:]* You shall discover whether he thinks his best means, his most powerful interest, is by the solicitation of your lady. JOHNSON.

⁴ *—strain his entertainment—]* Press hard his re-admission to his pay and office. *Entertainment* was the military term for admission of foldiers. JOHNSON.

So, in *Coriolanus*: “—the centurions, and their charges, distinctly billeted, and already in the *entertainment*.” STEEVENS.

⁵ *Fear not my government.]* Do not distrust my ability to contain my passion. JOHNSON.

⁶ *—with a learned spirit,]* *Learned*, for experienced. WARBURTON.

The construction is, He knows with a learned spirit all qualities of human dealings. JOHNSON.

⁷ *—If I do prove her haggard,]* A *baggard* hawk, is a wild hawk, a hawk unreclaimed, or irreclaimable. JOHNSON.

A *baggard* is a particular species of hawk. It is difficult to be reclaimed, but not irreclaimable.

From a passage in *The White Devil*, or *Vittoria Corombona*,

Though that her jesses were my dear heart-strings,⁸
I'd whistle her off, and let her down the wind,
To prey at fortune.⁹ Haply, for I am black;

1612, it appears that *baggard* was a term of reproach sometimes applied to a wanton: "Is this your perch, you *baggard*? fly to the stews."

Turbervile says, that "*baggart* falcons are the most excellent birds of all other falcons." Latham gives to the *baggart* only the second place in the *valued file*. In *Holland's Leaguer*, a comedy, by Shakerly Marmyon, 1633, is the following illustrative passage:

"Before these courtiers lick their lips at her,
"I'll trust a wanton *baggard* in the wind."

Again:

"For she is ticklish as any *baggard*,
"And quickly loft."

Again, in *Two wise Men, and all the rest Fools*, 1619: "—the admirable conquest the falconer maketh in a hawk's nature; bringing the *wild baggard*, having all the earth and seas to scow over uncontrollably, to attend and obey," &c. *Haggard*, however, had a popular sense, and was used for *wild* by those who thought not on the language of falconers. STEEVENS.

⁸ *Though that her jesses were my dear heart-strings,*] *Jesses* are short straps of leather tied about the foot of a hawk, by which she is held on the fist. HANMER.

In Heywood's comedy, called, *A Woman killed with Kindness*, 1617, a number of these terms relative to hawking occur together:

"Now she hath seiz'd the fowl, and 'gins to plume her;
"Rebeck her not; rather stand still and check her.
"So: seize her gets, her *jesses*, and her bells."

STEEVENS.

⁹ *I'd whistle her off, and let her down the wind,*

To prey at fortune.] The falconers always let fly the hawk against the wind; if she flies with the wind behind her, she seldom returns. If therefore a hawk was for any reason to be dismissed, she was *let down the wind*, and from that time shifted for herself, and *preyed at fortune*. This was told me by the late Mr. Clark.

JOHNSON.

This passage may possibly receive illustration from a similar one in Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, p. 2, sect. i. mem. 3: "As a long-winged hawk, when he is first *whistled off the fist*, mounts aloft, and for his pleasure fetcheth many a circuit in the ayre, still

And have not those soft parts of conversation⁴
That chamberers³ have: Or, for I am declin'd
Into the vale of years;—yet that's not much;—
She's gone; I am abus'd; and my relief
Must be—to loath her. O curse of marriage,
That we can call these delicate creatures ours,
And not their appetites! I had rather be a toad,
And live upon the vapour of a dungeon,
Than keep a corner in the thing I love,
For others' uses. Yet, 'tis the plague of great ones;
Prerogativ'd are they less than the base:⁴

soaring higher and higher, till he comes to his full pitch, and in the end, when the game is sprung, comes down amaine, and *stoupes* upon a sudden." PERCY.

Again, in *The Spanish Gipsie*, 1653, by Middleton and Rowley:

" ——— That young *lannerd*,

" Whom you have such a mind to; if you can *whistle* her

" To come to *fi*, make trial, play the young *falconer*."

A *lannerd* is a species of a hawk.

Again, in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Bonduca*:

" ——— he that basely

" *Whistled* his honour off to the wind," &c. STEEVENS.

² ——— parts of conversation—] *Parts* seems here to be synonymous with *arts*, as in '*'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, Act II. speaking of singing and musick:

" They are *parts* I love." REED.

³ ——— chamberers—] i. e. men of intrigue. So, in the Countess of Pembroke's *Antonius*, 1590:

" Fal'n from a souldier to a *chamberer*."

Again, in Chaucer's *Romaunt of the Rose*, ver. 4935:

" Only through youth the *chamberere*."

Thus, in the French poem:

" Par la jeunesse la *chambriere*." STEEVENS.

The sense of *chamberers* may be ascertained from *Rom.* xiii. 13, where *μὴ κοιταῖς* is rendered, in the common version, "*not in CHAMBERING*." HENLEY.

Chambering and *wantonness* are mentioned together in the sacred writings. MALONE.

⁴ *Prerogativ'd are they less than the base:*] In asserting that the base have more prerogative in this respect than the great, that is, that the base or poor are less likely to endure this forked plague, our

'Tis destiny unshunnable, like death;⁵
Even then this forked plague⁶ is fated to us,

poet has maintained a doctrine contrary to that laid down in *As you like it*:—"Horns? even so.—*Poor men* alone? No, no; the *noblest* deer has them as huge as the *rascal*." Here we find all mankind are placed on a level in this respect, and that it is "destiny unshunnable, like death."

Shakspeare would have been more consistent, if he had written,
Prerogativ'd are they more than the base?

Othello would then have answered his own question: [*No*]; 'Tis destiny, &c. MALONE.

Allowance must be made to the present state of Othello's mind: passion is seldom correct in its effusions. STEEVENS.

⁵ 'Tis destiny unshunnable, like death;] To be consistent, Othello must mean, that it is destiny unshunnable by *great ones*, not by all mankind. MALONE.

⁶ — forked plague —] In allusion to a *barbed* or *forked* arrow, which, once infix'd, cannot be extracted. JOHNSON.

Or rather, the *forked plague* is the cuckold's horns. PERCY.

Dr. Johnson *may* be right. I meet with the same thought in Middleton's comedy of *A mad World my Masters*, 1608:

"While the broad arrow, with the *forked head*,

"Misses his brows but narrowly."

Again, in *King Lear*:

"——— though the *fork* invade

"The region of my heart." STEEVENS.

I have no doubt that Dr. Percy's interpretation is the true one. Let our poet speak for himself. "Quoth she," says Pandarus, in *Troilus and Cressida*, "which of these hairs is Paris, my husband? The *forked* one, quoth he; pluck it out, and give it him." Again, in *The Winter's Tale*:

"——— o'er head and ears a *fork'd* one."

So, in Tarleton's *News out of Purgatorie*: "——— but the old squire, knight of the *forked order*,—"

One of Sir John Harrington's epigrams, in which our poet's very expression is found, puts the matter beyond a doubt:

"Actæon guiltless unawares espying

"Naked Diana bathing in her bowre,

"Was plagu'd with *bornes*; his dogs did him devour;

"Wherefore take heed, ye that are curious, prying,

"With some such *forked plague* you be not smitten,

"And in your foreheads see your faults be written."

MALONE.

When we do quicken. Desdemona comes :⁷

Enter DESDEMONA and EMILIA.

If she be false, O, then heaven mocks itself!⁸—
I'll not believe it.

DES. How now, my dear Othello?
Your dinner, and the generous islanders⁹
By you invited, do attend your presence.

OTH. I am to blame.

DES. Why is your speech so faint? are you not well?

OTH. I have a pain upon my forehead here.

DES. Faith, that's with watching; 'twill away
again:

Let me but bind it hard, within this hour
It will be well.

OTH. Your napkin is too little;¹⁰
[*He puts the handkerchief from him, and it drops.*]

⁷ — *Desdemona comes :*] Thus the quartos. The folio reads—
Look where she comes. STEEVENS.

⁸ *If she be false, O, then heaven mocks itself!*] i. e. renders its
own labours fruitless, by forming so beautiful a creature as Desde-
mona, and suffering the elegance of her person to be disgraced and
sullied by the impurity of her mind.—Such, I think, is the mean-
ing.—The construction, however, may be different. If she be
false, O, then even *heaven itself* cheats us with “unreal mocke-
ries,” with false and specious appearances, intended only to deceive.

MALONE.

The first of the foregoing explanations, is, I believe, the true
one.—*If she be false, heaven disgraces itself by creating woman after
its own image. To have made the resemblance perfect, she should have
been good as well as beautiful.* STEEVENS.

⁹ — *the generous islanders—*] Are the islanders of rank, *dis-
tinction.* So, in *Measure for Measure*:

“The generous and gravest citizens

“Have hent the gates.”

Generous has here the power of *generosus*, Lat. This explanation,
however, may be too particular. STEEVENS.

¹⁰ *Your napkin &c.*] Ray says, that a pocket handkerchief is so

Let it alone. Come, I'll go in with you.

DES. I am very sorry that you are not well.

[*Exeunt* OTH. and DES.]

EMIL. I am glad, I have found this napkin;
This was her first remembrance from the Moor:
My wayward husband hath a hundred times
Woo'd me to steal it: but she so loves the token,
(For he conjur'd her, she should ever keep it,)
That she reserves it evermore about her,
To kifs, and talk to. I'll have the work ta'en out,³
And give it Iago:

called about Sheffield in Yorkshire. So, in Greene's *Never too late*, 1616: "I can wet one of my new lockeram *napkins* with weeping."

Napery signifies *linen in general*. So, in Decker's *Honest Whore*, 1635: "— prythee put me into wholefome *napery*." Again, in Chapman's *May Day*, 1611: "Besides your munition of *manchet*, *napery*, plates," &c. Again, in *Hide Park*, by Shirley, 1637: "A gentleman that loves clean *napery*." *Naperia*, Ital. STEEVENS.

In the North of England, and in Scotland, this term for a handkerchief is still used. The word has already often occurred. See Vol. VII. p. 426, n. 7; and Vol. XII. p. 336, n. 4. MALONE.

³ — *I'll have the work ta'en out,*] That is, copied. Her first thoughts are, to have a copy made of it for her husband, and restore the original to Desdemona. But the sudden coming in of Iago, in a surly humour, makes her alter her resolution, to please him. The same phrase afterwards occurs between Cassio and Bianca, in scene iv. BLACKSTONE.

This scheme of getting the work of this valued handkerchief copied, and restoring the original to Desdemona, was, I suppose, introduced by the poet, to render Emilia less unamiable.

It is remarkable, that when she perceives Othello's fury on the loss of this token, though she is represented as affectionate to her mistress, she never attempts to relieve her from her distress; which she might easily have done by demanding the handkerchief from her husband, or divulging the story, if he refused to restore it.—But this would not have served the plot.

Shakspeare fell into this incongruity by departing from Cinthio's novel; for there, while the artless Desdemona is caressing the child of Othello's ancient, (the Iago of our play,) the villain steals the handkerchief which hung at her girdle, without the knowledge of his wife. MALONE.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 537

What he'll do with it, heaven knows, not I;
I nothing, but to please his fantasy,⁴

Enter IAGO.

IAGO. How now! what do you here alone?

EMIL. Do not you chide; I have a thing for you.

IAGO. A thing for me?—it is a common thing.

EMIL. Ha!

IAGO. To have a foolish wife.

EMIL. O, is that all? What will you give me
now

For that same handkerchief?

IAGO. What handkerchief?

EMIL. What handkerchief?

Why, that the Moor first gave to Desdemona;
That which so often you did bid me steal.

IAGO. Hast stolen it from her?

EMIL. No, faith; she let it drop by negligence;
And, to the advantage, I, being here, took't up.⁵
Look, here it is.

IAGO. A good wench; give it me.

EMIL. What will you do with it, that you have
been so earnest

To have me filch it?

⁴ *I nothing, but to please his fantasy.*] Thus the folio. The quarto, 1622, reads:

I nothing know but for his fantasy. STEEVENS.

⁵ — *to the advantage, &c.*] I being *opportunistically* here, took it up. JOHNSON.

So Marlowe's *King Edward II*:

“ And there stay time's *advantage* with your son.”

REED.

IAGO.

Why, what's that to you?

[Snatching it.]

EMIL. If it be not for some purpose of import,
Give it me again: Poor lady! she'll run mad,
When she shall lack it.

IAGO. Be not you known of't;⁶ I have use for
it.

Go, leave me.

[Exit EMILIA.]

I will in Cassio's lodging lose this napkin,
And let him find it: Trifles, light as air,
Are, to the jealous, confirmations strong
As proofs of holy writ. This may do something.
The Moor already changes with my poison:⁷—
Dangerous conceits are, in their natures, poisons,
Which, at the first, are scarce found to distaste;

⁶ *Be not you known of't;*] i. e. seem as if you knew nothing of the matter. The folio reads—*Be not acknown on't*; meaning, perhaps,—“do not acknowledge any thing of the matter.”

This word occurs also in the seventh book of Golding's Translation of *Ovid's Metamorphosis*:

“Howbeit I durst not be so bolde of hope *acknowne* to be.”

Again, in Puttenham's *Arte of English Poesie*, 1589, p. 212: “—so would I not have a translatour be ashamed to be *acknowen* of his translation.” STEEVENS.

Again, in *The Life of Ariosto*, subjoined to Sir John Harrington's Translation of *Orlando*, p. 418, edit. 1607: “Some say, he was married to her privlie, but durst not be *acknowne* of it.

PORSON.

Be not you known of't;] Thus the quarto, except that it has *on't*, the vulgar corruption in speaking and writing, of *of't* or *of it*; as is proved by various passages in these plays as exhibited in the folio and quarto, where in one copy we find the corrupt and in the other the genuine words: and both having the same meaning.

The participial adjective, found in the folio, is used by Thomas Kyd, in his *Cornelia*, a tragedy, 1594:

“Our friends' misfortune doth increase our own.

“*Cic.* But ours of others will not be *acknowen*.”

MALONE.

⁷ *The Moor already &c.*] Thus the folio. The line is not in the original copy, 1622. MALONE.

But, with a little act upon the blood,
Burn like the mines of sulphur.—I did say so:¹—

Enter OTHELLO.

Look, where he comes! Not poppy, nor mandra-
gora,²
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,
Shall ever med'cine thee to that sweet sleep
Which thou ow'dst yesterday.³

¹ — *I did say so:—*] As this passage is supposed to be obscure, I shall attempt an explanation of it.

Iago first ruminates on the qualities of the passion which he is labouring to excite; and then proceeds to comment on its effects. *Jealousy* (says he) *with the smallest operation on the blood, flames out with all the violence of sulphur, &c.*

“ — I did say so;

“ Look where he comes!” —

i. e. I knew that the least touch of such a passion would not permit the Moor to enjoy a moment of repose:—I have just said that jealousy is a restless commotion of the mind; and look where Othello approaches, to confirm the propriety and justice of my observation.

STEEVENS.

As Mr. Steevens has by his interpretation elicited some meaning (though I still think an obscure one) out of this difficult hemistich, I readily retract an amendment I had formerly proposed, being of opinion that such bold and licentious conjectures can never be warranted, unless where the sense is quite desperate. BLACKSTONE.

² — *nor mandragora,*] The *mandragoras* or *mandrake* has a soporific quality, and the ancients used it when they wanted an opiate of the most powerful kind.

So *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act I. sc. vi:

“ — give me to drink *mandragora*,

“ That I may sleep out this great gap of time

“ My Antony is away.” STEEVENS.

See Vol. XII. p. 451, n. 7. MALONE.

³ *Which thou ow'dst yesterday.*] To *owe* is, in our author, oftener to *possess*, than to *be indebted*, and such is its meaning here.

JOHNSON.

See Vol. VIII. p. 45, n. 5. MALONE.

OTH. Ha! ha! false to me?
To me?

IAGO. Why, how now, general? no more of that.

OTH. Avaunt! be gone! thou hast set me on the rack:—

I swear, 'tis better to be much abus'd,
Than but to know't a little.

IAGO. How now, my lord?

OTH. What sense had I of her stolen hours of
lust?³

³ *What sense had I &c.*] A similar passage to this and what follows it, is found in an *unpublished* tragi-comedy by Thomas Middleton, called *The Witch*:

"I feele no ease; the burthen's not yet off,
"So long as the abuse sticks in my knowledge.
"Oh, 'tis a paine of hell to know one's shame!
"Had it byn hid and don, it had ben don happy,
"For he that's ignorant lives long and merry."

Again:

"Had'st thou byn secret, then had I byn happy,
"And had a hope (like man) of joies to come.
"Now here I stand a stayne to my creation;
"And, which is heavier than all torments to me,
"The understanding of this base adultery," &c.

This is uttered by a jealous husband who supposes himself to have just destroyed his wife.

Again, *Iago* says:

"Dangerous conceits, &c.—
"—— with a little act upon the blood,
"Burn like the mines of sulphur."

Thus *Sebastian*, in Middleton's play:

"When a suspect doth catch once, it burnes maynely."

A scene between *Francisca* and her brother *Antonio*, when the first excites his jealousy, has likewise several circumstances in common with the dialogue which passes between *Iago* and *Othello* on the same subject.

This piece contains also a passage very strongly resembling another in *Hamlet*, who says:—"I am but mad north-north-west: when the wind is southerly, I know a hawk from a hand-saw."—Thus, *Almachides*:—"There is some difference betwixt my joviall condition and the lunary state of madnes. I am not quight out of

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 541

I saw it not, thought it not, it harm'd not me :
 I slept the next night well, was free and merry ;⁴
 I found not Cassio's kisses on her lips :
 He that is robb'd, not wanting what is stolen,
 Let him not know it, and he's not robb'd at all.

IAGO. I am sorry to hear this.

OTH. I had been happy, if the general camp,
 Pioneers and all,⁵ had tasted her sweet body,
 So I had nothing known : O now, for ever,
 Farewell the tranquil mind ! farewell content !
 Farewell the plumed troop, and the big wars,
 That make ambition virtue ! O, farewell !
 Farewell the neighing steed,⁶ and the shrill trump,

my wits : I know a bawd from an aqua-vitæ shop, a strumpet from wild-fire, and a beadle from brimstone."

For a further account of this MS. play, see in Vol. I. a note on Mr. Malone's *Attempt to ascertain the order in which the pieces of Shakspeare were written* :—Article, *Macbeth*. STEEVENS.

⁴ *I slept the next night well, was free and merry ;*] Thus the quartos. The folio reads :

" *I slept the next night well, fed well ; was free and merry.*"
 STEEVENS.

⁵ ——— *if the general camp,*

Pioneers and all,] That is, the most abject and vilest of the camp. Pioneers were generally degraded soldiers, appointed to the office of pioneer, as a punishment for misbehaviour.

" A soldier ought ever to retaine and keep his arms in fastie and forth comming, for he is more to be detested than a coward, that will lose or play away any part thereof, or refuse it for his ease, or to avoid paines ; wherefore such a one is to be dismissed with punishment, or to be made some *abject pinner*." *The Art of War and England Traynings*, &c. by Edward Davies, Gent. 1619.

So, in *The Laws and Ordinances of War* established by the earl of Essex, printed in 1640 : " If a trooper shall loose his horse or hackney, or a footman any part of his arms, by negligence or lewdnesse, by dice or cardes ; he or they shall remain in qualitie of *pioners*, or scavengers, till they be furnished with as good as were lost, at their own charge." GROSE.

⁶ *Farewell the plumed troop, and the big wars,*——

Farewell the neighing steed, &c.] In a very ancient drama en-

The spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing fife,¹

titled *Common Conditions*, printed about 1576, Sedmond, who has lost his sister in a wood, thus expresses his grief:

"But farewell now, my couriers brave, attraped to the ground!

"Farewell! adue all pleasures eke, with comely hauke and hounde!

"Farewell, ye nobles all, farewell eche martial knight,

"Farewell, ye famous ladies all, in whom I did delight!

"Adue, my native foile, adue, Arbaccus kyng,

"Adue, eche wight, and martial knight, adue, eche living thyng!"

One is almost tempted to think that Shakspeare had read this old play. MALONE.

I know not why we should suppose that Shakspeare borrowed so common a repetition as these diversified *farewells* from any preceding drama. A string of *adieux* is perhaps the most tempting of all repetitions, because it serves to introduce a train of imagery, and as well as to solemnify a speech or composition. *Wolsey*, like *Othello*, indulges himself in many *farewells*; and the

"*Valete*, aprica montium cacumina!

"*Valete*, opaca vallium cubilia!" &c.

are common to poets of different ages and countries. I have now before me an ancient MS. English Poem, in which sixteen succeeding verses begin with the word *farewell*, applied to a variety of objects and circumstances:

"*Farewell* prowesse in purpell pall" &c. STEEVENS.

¹ *The spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing fife,*] In mentioning the *fife* joined with the *drum*, Shakspeare as usual, paints from the life; those instruments accompanying each other being used in his age by the English soldiery. The *fife*, however, as a martial instrument, was afterwards entirely discontinued among our troops for many years, but at length revived in the war before the last. It is commonly supposed that our soldiers borrowed it from the Highlanders in the last rebellion: but I do not know that the *fife* is peculiar to the Scotch, or even used at all by them. It was first used within the memory of man among our troops by the British guards, by order of the duke of Cumberland, when they were encamped at Maestricht, in the year 1747, and thence soon adopted into other English regiments of infantry. They took it from the Allies with whom they served. This instrument, accompanying the drum, is of considerable antiquity in the European armies, particularly the German. In a curious picture in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, painted 1525, representing the siege of Pavia by the French king where the emperor was taken prisoner,

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 541

I saw it not, thought it not, it harm'd not me:
I slept the next night well, was free and merry;⁴
I found not Cassio's kisses on her lips:
He that is robb'd, not wanting what is stolen,
Let him not know it, and he's not robb'd at all.

IAGO. I am sorry to hear this.

OTH. I had been happy, if the general camp,
Pioneers and all,⁵ had tasted her sweet body,
So I had nothing known: O now, for ever,
Farewell the tranquil mind! farewell content!
Farewell the plumed troop, and the big wars,
That make ambition virtue! O, farewell!
Farewell the neighing steed,⁶ and the shrill trump,

my wits: I know a bawd from an aqua-vitæ shop, a strumpet from wild-fire, and a beadle from brimstone."

For a further account of this MS. play, see in Vol. I. a note on Mr. Malone's *Attempt to ascertain the order in which the pieces of Shakspeare were written*:—Article, *Macbeth*. STEEVENS.

⁴ *I slept the next night well, was free and merry*;] Thus the quartos. The folio reads:

"I slept the next night well, *fed well*; was free and merry."

STEEVENS.

⁵ ——— *if the general camp,*

Pioneers and all,] That is, the most abject and vilest of the camp. Pioneers were generally degraded soldiers, appointed to the office of pioneer, as a punishment for misbehaviour.

"A soldier ought ever to retaine and keep his arms in fastie and forth comming, for he is more to be detested than a coward, that will lose or play away any part thereof, or refuse it for his ease, or to avoid paines; wherefore such a one is to be dismissed with punishment, or to be made some *abject pinner*." *The Art of War and England Traynings*, &c. by Edward Davies, Gent. 1619.

So, in *The Laws and Ordinances of War* established by the earl of Essex, printed in 1640: "If a trooper shall loose his horse or hackney, or a footman any part of his arms, by negligence or lewdnesse, by dice or cardes; he or they shall remain in qualitie of *pioners*, or scavengers, till they be furnished with as good as were lost, at their own charge." GROSE.

⁶ *Farewell the plumed troop, and the big wars,*——

Farewell the neighing steed, &c.] In a very ancient drama en-

Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war!⁸
 And O you mortal engines, whose rude throats⁹
 The immortal Jove's dread clamours counterfeit,
 Farewell! Othello's occupation's gone!

IAGO. Is it possible?—My lord,—

OTH. Villain, be sure thou prove my love a whore;
 Be sure of it; give me the ocular proof;

[*Taking him by the throat.*]

Or, by the worth of mine eternal soul,²
 Thou hadst been better have been born a dog,
 Than answer my wak'd wrath.

IAGO. Is it come to this?

OTH. Make me to see it; or (at the least) so
 prove it,

That the probation bear no hinge, nor loop,
 To hang a doubt on: or, woe upon thy life!

IAGO. My noble lord,—

OTH. If thou dost slander her, and torture me,

⁸ *Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war!*] Sir William D'Avenant does not appear to have been scrupulous of adopting almost Shakspeare's own words. So, in *Albucine*, 1629:

“ Then *glorious war*, and all *proud circumstance*
 “ That gives a foldier noise, *for evermore farewell.*”

STEEVENS.

Fletcher has parodied this passage of *Othello*, in his *Prophets*, which was first represented in May, 1622:

“ ————— and to keep
 “ My faith untainted, *farewel pride, and pomp,*
 “ *And circumstance of glorious majesty,*
 “ Farewel, for ever!” MALONE.

⁹ — *whose rude throats* —] So, Milton, *Paradise Lost*, B. VI:

“ From those *deep-throated engines*,” &c.

The quarto, 1622, reads—*whose wide throats*. STEEVENS.

² — *mine eternal soul*,] Perhaps the quarto, 1622, more forcibly reads,

————— *man's eternal soul*,——.

Shakspeare might have designed an opposition between *man* and *dog*. STEEVENS.

Never pray more : abandon all remorse ;³
On horror's head horrors accumulate :
Do deeds to make heaven weep,⁴ all earth amaz'd,
For nothing canst thou to damnation add,
Greater than that.

IAGO. O grace ! O heaven defend me !
Are you a man ? have you a soul, or sense ?—
God be wi' you ; take mine office.—O wretched
fool,

That liv'st⁵ to make thine honesty a vice !—
O monstrous world ! Take note, take note, O world,
To be direct and honest, is not safe.—
I thank you for this profit ; and, from hence,
I'll love no friend, since⁶ love breeds such offence.

OTH. Nay, stay :—Thou should'st be honest.

IAGO. I should be wise ; for honesty's a fool,
And loses that it works for.

OTH. By the world,⁷
I think my wife be honest, and think she is not ;
I think that thou art just, and think thou art not ;
I'll have some proof : Her name,⁸ that was as fresh

³ ——— *abandon all remorse ;*] All tenderness of nature, all pity ; in which sense, as Mr. Steevens has justly observed, the word was frequently used in Shakspeare's time. See p. 553, n. 5. The next line shows it is used in this sense here. MALONE.

⁴ *Do deeds to make heaven weep,*] So, in *Measure for Measure* :
“ Plays such fantastick tricks before high heaven
“ *As make the angels weep.*” STEEVENS.

⁵ *That liv'st*—] Thus the quarto. The folio—that *liv'st*—
STEEVENS.

⁶ ——— *since*—] Thus the quarto. The folio—*since*, an antiquated word, with the same meaning. It occurs again in p. 548, l. 2. STEEVENS.

⁷ *By the world, &c.*] This speech is not in the first edition.

⁸ ——— *Her name, &c.*] The folio, where alone this speech is
POPE.

As Dian's visage, is now begrim'd and black
 As mine own face.—If there be cords, or knives,
 Poison, or fire, or suffocating streams,
 I'll not endure it.⁹—Would, I were satisfied!

IAGO. I see, sir, you are eaten up with passion:
 I do repent me, that I put it to you.
 You would be satisfied?

OTH. Would? nay, I will.

IAGO. And may: But, how? how satisfied, my lord?

Would you, the supervisor, grossly gape on?

found—*My name.* Mr. Pope and all the subsequent editors read—*Her name:* but this, like a thousand other changes introduced by the same editor, was made without either authority or necessity. Shakespeare undoubtedly might have written—*Her name;* but the word which the old copy furnishes, affords also good sense. Othello's name or reputation, according to the usual unjust determination of the world, would be sullied by the infidelity of his wife. Besides, how could either transcriber or printer have substituted *My* for *Her*?

MALONE.

I have adopted Mr. Pope's emendation, which, in my judgement, is absolutely necessary.

Othello would scarce have said—"My name," and immediately after—"mine own face." The words—"mine own," very plainly point out that an opposition was designed between the once unsullied reputation of Desdemona, and the blackness of his own countenance. The same thought occurs in *Titus Andronicus*:

"——— your swart Cimmerian

"Doth make *your* honour of *his* body's hue."

I may add—Would a *man* have compared his own reputation to the face of a *goddess*?

The query with which Mr. Malone's note concludes, is easily answered. In three late proof sheets of this work, a couple of the most accurate compositors in general, had substituted *palace, lest, and catch*, instead of—*tragedy, more, and ensnare*. STEVENS.

⁹ — *If there be cords, or knives,*

Poison, or fire, or suffocating streams,

*I'll not endure it.] So, in *Pericles*:*

"If fires be hot, knives sharp, or waters deep,

"Untied I still my virgin knot will keep." MALONE.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 547

Behold her tupp'd? *

OTH. Death and damnation! O!

IAGO. It were a tedious difficulty, I think,
To bring them to that prospect: Damn them then,
If ever mortal eyes do see them bolster,
More than their own! What then? how then?
What shall I say? Where's satisfaction?
It is impossible, you should see this,
Were they as prime as goats,³ as hot as monkeys,
As salt as wolves in pride, and fools as gross
As ignorance made drunk. But yet, I say,
If imputation, and strong circumstances,—
Which lead directly to the door of truth,—
Will give you satisfaction, you may have it.

OTH. Give me a living reason⁴ she's disloyal.

* *Behold her tupp'd?*] A ram in Staffordshire and some other counties is called a *tup*. So, in the first act:

“ ——— an old black ram

“ Is *tapping* your white ewe.” STEEVENS.

The old copies have—*topp'd*. Mr. Theobald made the correction.

MALONE.

³ *Were they as prime as goats,*] *Prime* is *prompt*, from the Celtic or British *prim*. HANMER.

From *prim*, forward; French. RITSON.

So, in *The Vow-breaker, or the faire Maide of Clifton*, 1636:

“ More *prime* than goats or monkies in their prides.”

Again, in Churchyard's *Dream*, 1593:

“ Colde fortune may torment me fore,

“ And so may shifts some time:

“ Not hatred troubles men much more

“ Than Venus in her *prime*.” STEEVENS.

⁴ *Give me a living reason—*] *Living*, for speaking, manifest.

WARBURTON.

Give me a living reason that she's disloyal.] Thus the quarto, 1622. The folio omits the word *that*, probably for the sake of the metre; but our poet often uses such words as *reason*, as a monosyllable. MALONE.

IAGO. I do not like the office :
 But, sith I am enter'd in this cause so far,—
 Prick'd to it by foolish honesty and love,—
 I will go on. I lay with Cassio lately ;
 And, being troubled with a raging tooth,
 I could not sleep.
 There are a kind of men so loose of soul,
 That in their sleeps will mutter their affairs ;
 One of this kind is Cassio :
 In sleep I heard him say,—*Sweet Desdemona,*
Let us be wary, let us hide our loves !
 And then, sir, would he gripe, and wring my hand,
 Cry,—*O, sweet creature !* and then kifs me hard,
 As if he pluck'd up kisses by the roots,
 That grew upon my lips : then lay'd his leg
 Over my thigh, and sigh'd, and kifs'd ; and then
 Cry'd,—*Curfed fate ! that gave thee to the Moor !*

OTH. O monstrous ! monstrous !

IAGO. Nay, this was but his dream.

OTH. But this denoted a foregone conclusion ;⁶

How such words as *reason* can be pronounced as *monosyllables*, I am yet to learn. STEEVENS.

A *living* reason is a reason founded on fact and experience, not on surmise or conjecture : a reason that convinces the understanding as perfectly as if the fact were exhibited *to the life*. MALONE.

What Othello here demands is *actual* proof, arising from some positive FACT. HENLEY.

⁵ ——— and *figh'd*, and *kifs'd* ; and then

Cry'd,] Thus the quarto, 1622. The folio reads :

“ ——— then lay'd his leg o'er my thigh,

“ And *figh*, and *kifs*, and then *cry*, *curfed fate*,” &c.

The omission of the personal pronoun before *lay'd* is much in our author's manner. See Vol. XIV. p. 115, n. 6. MALONE.

⁶ ——— a foregone conclusion ;] *Conclusion*, for fact.

WARBURTON.

A *conclusion* in Shakspeare's time meant an experiment or trial. See Vol. XII. p. 683, n. 8. MALONE.

'Tis a shrewd doubt, though it be but a dream.⁷

IAGO. And this may help to thicken other proofs,
That do demonstrate thinly.

OTH. I'll tear her all to pieces.

IAGO. Nay, but be wise: yet we see nothing
done;⁸

She may be honest yet. Tell me but this,—
Have you not sometimes seen a handkerchief,
Spotted with strawberries, in your wife's hand?

OTH. I gave her such a one; 'twas my first gift.

IAGO. I know not that: but such a handkerchief,
(I am sure, it was your wife's,) did I to-day
See Cassio wipe his beard with.

OTH. If it be that,—

IAGO. If it be that, or any that was hers,⁹
It speaks against her, with the other proofs.

OTH. O, that the slave had forty thousand lives!
One is too poor, too weak for my revenge!
Now do I see 'tis true.¹—Look here, Iago;

⁷ 'Tis a shrewd doubt, &c.] The old quarto gives this line, with the two following, to Iago; and rightly. WARBURTON.

In the folio this line is given to Othello. MALONE.

I think it more naturally spoken by Othello, who, by dwelling so long upon the proof, encouraged Iago to enforce it. JOHNSON.

⁸ —yet we see nothing done;] This is an oblique and secret mock at Othello's saying,—Give me the ocular proof. WARBURTON.

⁹ —that was hers,] The only authentick copies, the quarto, 1622, and the folio, read—or any, it was hers. For the emendation I am answerable. The mistake probably arose from *ys* only being written in the manuscript. The modern editors, following an amendment made by the editor of the second folio, read—if 'twas her's. MALONE.

I prefer Mr. Malone's correction to that of the second folio, though the latter gives sense where it was certainly wanting.

STEVENS.

¹ Now do I see 'tis true.] The old quarto reads:

Now do I see 'tis time.

All my fond love thus do I blow to heaven: 3

'Tis gone.—

Arise, black vengeance, from thy hollow cell! 4

And this is Shakspeare's, and has in it much more force and solemnity, and preparation for what follows: as alluding to what he had said before:

“ ———— No, Iago!

“ I'll see before I doubt, when I doubt, prove;

“ And, on the proof, there is no more but this,

“ Away at once with love or jealousy.”

This time was now come. WARBURTON.

3 All my fond love thus do I blow to heaven:] So, in Marlowe's *Lust's Dominion*, 1657:

“ Are these your fears? thus blow them into air.” MALONE.

Marlowe's idea was perhaps caught from Horace:

“ Tradam protervis in mare Creticum

“ Portare ventis.” STEEVENS.

4 ———— from thy hollow cell!] Thus the quarto, 1622. The folio reads—from the *hollow bell*. *Hollow*, Dr. Warburton considers as “a poor unmeaning epithet.” MALONE.

I do not perceive that the epithet *hollow* is at all unmeaning, when applied to hell, as it gives the idea of what Milton calls,

“ ———— the void profound

“ Of unessential night.”

The same phrase indeed occurs in Jasper Heywood's translation of Seneca's *Thyestes*, 1560:

“ Where most prodigious ugly things the *hollow bell* doth hide.”

Again, in Goulart's *Admirable Histories*, 1607, p. 626: “— cast headlong into places under-ground that were wonderful *hollow*— where he had seen the persons of the wicked, their punishments” &c.

STEEVENS.

Again, in *Paradise Lost*, B. I. v. 314, the same epithet and subject occur:

“ He call'd so loud, that all the *hollow* deep

“ Of *bell* resounded.” HOLT WHITE.

Milton was a great reader and copier of Shakspeare, and he undoubtedly read his plays in the folio, without thinking of examining the more ancient quartos. In the first book of *Paradise Lost*, we find—

“ ———— the universal host up sent

“ A shout that tore *bell's* concave.” MALONE.

See Vol. XIV. p. 410, n. 9. STEEVENS.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 551

Yield up, O love, thy crown, and hearted throne,⁵
To tyrannous hate! swell, bosom, with thy fraught,⁶
For 'tis of aspicks' tongues!

IAGO. Pray, be content.

OTH. O, blood, Iago, blood!

IAGO. Patience, I say; your mind, perhaps, may
change.

OTH. Never, Iago.⁷ Like to the Pontick sea,⁸
Whose icy current and compulsive course
Ne'er feels retiring ebb,⁹ but keeps due on

⁵ — hearted throne,] *Hearted* throne, is the heart on which thou wast *enthroned*. JOHNSON.

So, in *Twelfth Night*:

"It gives a very echo to the seat,

"Where love is *thron'd*."

See also *Romeo and Juliet*, Vol. XIV. p. 533, n. 3. MALONE.

⁶ — swell, bosom, &c.] i. e. *swell*, because the fraught is of poison. Warburton.

⁷ *Never, Iago.*] From the word *Like*, to *marble heaven*, inclusively, is not found in the quarto, 1622. MALONE.

⁸ — *Like to the Pontick sea, &c.*] This simile is omitted in the first edition: I think it should be so, as an unnatural excursion in this place. POPE.

Every reader will, I durst say, abide by Mr. Pope's censure on this passage. When Shakspeare grew acquainted with such particulars of knowledge, he made a display of them as soon as opportunity offered. He found this in the 2d Book and 97th Chapter of Pliny's *Natural History*, as translated by Philemon Holland, 1601: "And the sea Pontus evermore floweth and runneth out into Propontis, but the sea never retireth backe againe within Pontus."

Mr. Edwards, in his MSS. notes, conceives this simile to allude to Sir Philip Sidney's device, whose imprefs, Camden, in his *Remains*, says, was the Caspian sea, with this motto, *Sine refluxu*.

STEEVENS.

⁹ *Ne'er feels retiring ebb,*] The folio, where alone this passage is found, reads—*Ne'er keeps* retiring ebb, &c. Many similar mistakes have happened in that copy, by the compositor's repeating a word twice in the same line. So, in *Hamlet*:

"My news shall be the news [i. fruit] to that great feast."

To the Propontick, and the Hellespont;
 Even so my bloody thoughts, with violent pace,
 Shall ne'er look back, ne'er ebb to humble love,
 Till that a capable and wide revenge²
 Swallow them up.—Now, by yond' marble heaven,³
 In the due reverence of a sacred vow [Kneels.
 I here engage my words.

IAGO.

Do not rise yet.—

[Kneels.

Witness, you ever-burning lights above!
 You elements that clip us round about!
 Witness, that here Iago doth give up
 The execution⁴ of his wit, hands, heart,

Again, *ibidem* :

"The spirit, upon whose *spirit* depend and rest," &c.
 instead of upon whose *weal*. The correction was made by Mr.
 Pope. MALONE.

² — a capable and wide revenge —] *Capable* perhaps signifies
 ample, capacious. So, in *As you like it* :

"The cicatrice and *capable* impressure."

Again in *Pierce Penniless his Supplication to the Devil*, by Nashe,
 1592 : "Then belike, quoth I, you make this word, *Dæmon*, a
capable name, of Gods, of men, of devils."

It may, however, mean *judicious*. In *Hamlet* the word is often
 used in the sense of *intelligent*. What Othello says in another place
 seems to favour this latter interpretation :

"Good ; good ;—the *justice* of it pleases me."

MALONE.

Capable means, I suppose, *comprehensive*. STEEVENS.

³ — by yond' marble heaven,] In *Soliman and Perseda*, 1599,
 I find the same expression :

"Now by the *marble* face of the welkin," &c.

STEEVENS.

So, in Marston's *Antonio and Mellida*, 1602 :

"And pleas'd the *marble* heavens." MALONE.

⁴ The execution—] The first quarto reads—*excellency*.

STEEVENS.

By *execution* Shakspeare meant *employment* or *exercise*. So, in
Love's Labour's Lost :

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 553

To wrong'd Othello's service! let him command,
And to obey shall be in me remorse,
What bloody work soever.⁵

“ Full of comparisons and wounding flouts,

“ Which you on all estates will *execute*.”

The quarto, 1622, reads—*band*. MALONE.

Again, in *Troilus and Crissida*:

“ In fellest manner *execute* your arms.” STEEVENS.

⁵ ———— *let him command,*

And to obey shall be in me remorse,

What bloody work soever.] Iago devotes himself to wronged Othello, and says, *Let him command whatever bloody business, and in me it shall be an act, not of cruelty, but of tenderness, to obey him; not of malice to others, but of tenderness for him.* If this sense be thought too violent, I see nothing better than to follow Mr. Pope's reading, as it is improved by Mr. Theobald. JOHNSON.

The quarto, 1622, has not the words—*in me*. They first appeared in the folio. Theobald reads—*Nor to obey, &c.*

MALONE.

Dr. Johnson's interpretation is undoubtedly the true one; and I can only claim the merit of supporting his sense of the word *remorse*, i. e. *pity*, by the following instances.

In Lord Surrey's translation of the 4th *Æneid*, Dido says to her sister:

“ Sister I crave thou have *remorse* of me.”

Again, in *King Edward III.* 1599, that Prince speaking to the citizens of Calais:

“ But for yourselves, look you for no *remorse*.”

Again, in *Sir Clyomon Knight of the Golden Shield*, 1599:

“ Who taketh no *remorse* of womankind.”

Again, in *Sir John Oldcastle*, 1600:

“ Here stand I, craving no *remorse* at all.”

I could add many more instances, but shall content myself to observe that the sentiment of Iago bears no small resemblance to that of Arviragus in *Cymbeline*:

“ I'd let a parish of such Clotens blood,

“ And praise myself for charity.” STEEVENS.

Before I saw Dr. Johnson's edition of Shakspeare, my opinion of this passage was formed, and written, and thus I understood it: “ Let him command any bloody business, and to obey him shall be in me an act of pity and compassion for wrong'd Othello.” *Remorse* frequently signifies pity, mercy, compassion, or a tenderness of heart, unattended with the stings of a guilty conscience. So, in

OTH. I greet thy love,
Not with vain thanks, but with acceptance boun-
teous,
And will upon the instant put thee to't:
Within these three days let me hear thee say,
That Cassio's not alive.

IAGO. My friend is dead; 'tis done, at your re-
quest:⁶
But let her live.

OTH. Damn her, lewd minx! O, damn her!⁷
Come, go with me apart; I will withdraw,
To furnish me with some swift means of death
For the fair devil. Now art thou my lieutenant.

IAGO. I am your own for ever. [Exeunt.

The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Act IV. sc. iii. the crimeless
Eglamour is called *remorseful*. So, in *King Richard III.* Act III.
sc. vii:

“ As well we know your tenderness of heart,
“ And gentle, kind, effeminate *remorse*.”

So, in Holinshed's *Conquest of Ireland*, p. 13: “ ——— to have
remorse and compassion upon others distressed;” and in the dedica-
tion, “ to have regard and *remorse* to your said land.” TOLLET.

Some of the examples quoted by Mr. Steevens I have omitted,
as I think those already inserted are sufficient to prove the meaning
of the word. Mr. M. Mason says, he may venture to assert, that
Shakspeare seldom if ever uses the word in any other sense. REED.

If I am not deceived, this passage has been entirely mistaken.
I read:

————— *let him command,*
An' to obey shall be in me remorse,
What bloody business ever—.

And for *if* is sufficiently common: and Othello's impatience
breaks off the sentence; I think, with additional beauty. FARMER.

What bloody work soever.] So the quartos. The folio—
What bloody business ever. STEEVENS.

⁶ ——— at your request:] Thus the folio. The quarto, 1622,
reads—as you request. MALONE.

⁷ O, damn her!] Thus the quarto, 1622. Folio: O damn
her, damn her. MALONE.

S C E N E IV.

The same.

Enter DESDEMONA, EMILIA, and Clown.

Des. Do you know, firrah, where lieutenant Cassio lies?

Clo. I dare not say, he lies any where.

Des. Why, man?

Clo. He is a soldier; and for me to say a foldier lies, is stabbing.

Des. Go to; Where lodges he?

Clo. To tell you⁸ where he lodges, is to tell you where I lie.

Des. Can any thing be made of this?

Clo. I know not where he lodges; and for me to devise a lodging, and say—he lies here, or he lies there, were to lie in my own throat.

Des. Can you enquire him out, and be edified by report?

Clo. I will catechize the world for him; that is, make questions, and by them answer.⁹

⁸ *To tell you &c.*] This and the following speech are wanting in the first quarto. STEEVENS.

⁹ Clown. *I will catechize the world for him; that is, make questions, and by them answer.*] This Clown is a fool to some purpose. He was to go seek for one; he says, he will ask for him, and by his own questions make answer. Without doubt we should read—and bid them answer; i. e. the world; those whom he questions.

WARBURTON.

There is no necessity for changing the text. It is the clown's

DES. Seek him, bid him come hither : tell him, I have moved my lord in his behalf, and hope, all will be well.

CLO. To do this, is within the compass of man's wit ; and therefore I will attempt the doing it.⁹

[Exit.

DES. Where should I lose that handkerchief, Emilia?

EMIL. I know not, madam.

DES. Believe me, I had rather have lost my purse
Full of cruzadoes.^a And, but my noble Moor
Is true of mind, and made of no such baseness

play to wrench what is said, from its proper meaning. Sir T. More hath briefly worked his character : " he plaith the iester, now with skoffinge, and now with his overthwarte woords, to provoke all to laughter." His design here was to propose such questions as might elicit the information sought for from him, and therefore, BY his *questions* he might be enabled to *answer*.

HENLEY.

— and *by* them answer.] i. e. and by them, *when answered*, form my own answer to you. The quaintness of the expression is in character. *By* is found both in the quarto, 1622, and the folio.

The modern editors, following a quarto of no authority, printed in 1630, read—and *make* them answer. MALONE.

⁹ *To do this, is within the compass of man's wit ; and therefore &c.*] So, in *King Lear* :

" I cannot draw a cart, nor eat wild oats ;

" *If it be man's work, I'll do it.*" MALONE.

^a — *cruzadoes*.] A Portuguese coin, in value three shillings sterling. GREY.

So called from the cross stamped upon it. JOHNSON.

The exact value of a cruzado is here of no importance, nor does it appear precisely what it was in Shakspeare's time. By a mercantile friend I am informed, that there are at present three sorts. The imaginary one of the value of 2s. or 2s. $\frac{1}{2}$, like the English pound, is only a denomination, and not a coin. The two other sorts are really coins, and all the three differ in value. REED.

As jealous creatures are, it were enough
To put him to ill thinking.

EMIL. Is he not jealous?

DES. Who, he? I think, the fun, where he was
born,
Drew all such humours from him.

EMIL. Look, where he comes.

DES. I will not leave him now, till Cassio
Be call'd to him.³—How is't with you, my lord?

Enter OTHELLO.

OTH. Well, my good lady :—[*Aside.*] O, hardness
to dissemble !—
How do you, Desdemona?

DES. Well, my good lord.

OTH. Give me your hand: This hand is moist,
my lady.

DES. It yet has felt no age, nor known no sorrow.

OTH. This argues fruitfulness, and liberal
heart ;—

Hot, hot, and moist :⁴ This hand of yours requires
A sequester from liberty, fasting and prayer,

³ — till *Cassio*
Be call'd to him.] Thus the folio. The quarto, 1622, reads—
Let Cassio be call'd to him. MALONE.

⁴ *Hot, hot, and moist ;*] Ben Jonson seems to have attempted a
ridicule on this passage, in *Every Man out of his Humour*, Act V.
sc. ii. where Sogliardo says to Saviolina: "How does my sweet
lady? *hot and moist*? beautiful and lusty?" STEEVENS.

Ben Jonson was ready enough on all occasions to depreciate and
ridicule our author, but in the present instance, I believe, he must
be acquitted; for *Every Man out of his Humour* was printed in
1600, and written probably in the preceding year; at which time,
we are almost certain that *Othello* had not been exhibited.

MALONE.

Much castigation, exercise devout;⁴
 For here's a young and sweating devil here,
 That commonly rebels. 'Tis a good hand,
 A frank one.

DES. You may, indeed, say so;
 For 'twas that hand that gave away my heart.

OTH. A liberal hand: The hearts, of old, gave
 hands;
 But our new heraldry is—hands, not hearts.⁵

⁴ — exercise devout;] *Exercise* was the religious term. Henry the seventh (says Bacon) “had the fortune of a true christian as well as of a great king, in living exercised, and dying repentant.”

So, Lord Hastings in *King Richard III.* says to a priest:

“I am in debt for your last exercise.”

See Vol. X. p. 572, n. 7. MALONE.

⁵ — *The hearts, of old, gave hands;*

But our new heraldry is—hands, not hearts.] It is evident that the first line should be read thus:

The hands of old gave hearts;
 otherwise it would be no reply to the preceding words,

“For 'twas that hand that gave away my heart.”

Not so, says her husband: *The hands of old indeed gave hearts; but the custom now is to give hands without hearts.* The expression of *new heraldry* was a satirical allusion to the times. Soon after King James the First came to the crown, he created the new dignity of baronets for money. Amongst their other prerogatives of honour, they had an addition to their paternal arms, of a hand *gules* in an escutcheon *argent*. And we are not to doubt but that this was the *new heraldry* alluded to by our author: by which he insinuates, that some then created had *hands* indeed, but not *hearts*; that is, money to pay for the creation, but no virtue to purchase the honour. But the finest part of the poet's address in this allusion, is the compliment he pays to his old mistress Elizabeth. For James's pretence for raising money by this creation, was the reduction of Ulster, and other parts of Ireland; the memory of which he would perpetuate by that addition to their arms, it being the arms of Ulster. Now the method used by Elizabeth in the reduction of that kingdom was so different from this, the dignities she conferred being on those who employed their *steel*, and not their *gold* in this service, that nothing could add more to her glory, than the being compared to her successor in this point of view: nor was it uncommon for the dramatick poets of that time to satirize the ignominy of James's reign.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 559

DES. I cannot speak of this. Come now your promise.

So Fletcher, in *The Fair Maid of the Inn*. One says, *I will send thee to Amboyna in the East Indies for pepper*. The other replies, *To Amboyna? so I might be pepper'd*. Again, in the same play, a sailor says, *Despise not this pitch'd canvas, the time was, we have known them lined with Spanish ducats*. WARBURTON.

The historical observation is very judicious and acute, but of the emendation there is no need. She says, that her hand gave away *her heart*. He goes on with his suspicion, and the hand which he had before called *frank*, he now terms *liberal*; then proceeds to remark, that the *hand was formerly given by the heart*; but now it neither gives it, nor is given by it. JOHNSON.

I think, with Dr. Warburton, that the new order of baronets is here again alluded to. See *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Vol. III. p. 356, and Spelman's Epigram there cited:

" ————— *florentis nomen honoris*

" *Indicat in clypei fronte cruenta manus.*

" *Non quod sævi aliquid, aut stricto fortiter ense*

" *Hostibus occisis gesserit iste cohors.*" BLACKSTONE.

The reader will not find the epigram alluded to by Sir William Blackstone, in the page to which he has referred [in my edition], for I have omitted that part of his note, (an omission of which I have there given notice,) because it appeared to me extremely improbable that any passage in that play should allude to an event that did not take place till 1611. The omitted words I add here, (distinguishing them by Italick characters,) as they may appear to add weight to his opinion and that of Dr. Warburton.

" *I suspect this is an oblique reflection on the prodigality of James the first in bestowing these honours, and erecting a new order of knight-hood called baronets; which few of the ancient gentry would condescend to accept. See Sir Henry Spelman's epigram on them, GLOSS. p. 76, which ends thus:*

" ————— *dum cauponare recusant*

" *Ex verâ geniti nobilitate viri;*

" *Interea è caulis hic prorepit, ille tabernis,*

" *Et modo fit dominus, qui modo servus erat.*

See another stroke at them in *Otello*." MALONE.

My respect for the sentiments of Sir William Blackstone might have induced me to print both them, and the epigram referred to, in both places, even if the preceding remark of Mr. Malone had not, in this second instance, afforded them an apt introduction.

STEEVENS.

——— *our new heraldry, &c.]* I believe this to be only a figura-

OTH. What promise, chuck?

live expression, without the least reference to king James's creation of baronets. The absurdity of making Othello so familiar with British heraldry, the utter want of consistency as well as policy in any sneer of Shakspeare at the badge of honours instituted by a Prince whom on all other occasions he was solicitous to flatter, and at whose court this very piece was acted in 1613, most strongly incline me to question the propriety of Dr. Warburton's historical explanation. STEEVENS.

To almost every sentence of Dr. Warburton's note, an objection may be taken; but I have preserved it as a specimen of this commentator's manner.

It is not true that king James created the order of baronets *soon* after he came to the throne. It was created in the year 1611.—The conceit that by the word *hearts* the poet meant to allude to the gallantry of the reign of Elizabeth, in which men distinguished themselves by their *steel*, and that by *hands* those courtiers were pointed at, who served her inglorious successor only by their *gold*, is too fanciful to deserve an answer.

Thus Dr. Warburton's note stood as it appeared originally in Theobald's edition; but in his own, by way of confirmation of his notion, we are told, that "it was not uncommon for the satirical poets of that time to satirise the ignominy of James's reign;" and for this assertion we are referred to Fletcher's *Fair Maid of the Inn*. But, unluckily, it appears from the office-book of Sir Henry Herbert, a Ms. of which an account is given in Vol. II. that Fletcher's plays were generally performed at court soon after they were first exhibited at the theatre, and we may be assured that he would not venture to offend his courtly auditors. *The Fair Maid of the Inn*, indeed, never was performed before King James, being the last play but one that Fletcher wrote, and not produced till the 22d of Jan. 1625-6, after the death both of its author and king James; but when it was written, he must, from the circumstances already mentioned, have had the court before his eyes.

In various parts of our poet's works he has alluded to the custom of plighting troth by the union of hands.

So, in *Hamlet*:

"Since love our *hearts*, and *Hymen* did our *hands*

"Unite co-mutual in most sacred bands."

Again, in *The Tempest*, which was probably written at no great distance of time from the play before us:

"*Mir.* My husband then?

"*Fer.* Ay, with a heart as willing

"As bondage e'er of freedom. Here's my *hand*."

"*Mir.* And mine, with my *heart* in't."

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 561

DES. I have sent to bid Cassio come speak with you.

OTH. I have a salt and sullen rheum ⁶ offends me ;
Lend me thy handkerchief.

DES. Here, my lord.

OTH. That which I gave you.

DES. I have it not about me.

OTH. Not ?

DES. No, indeed, my lord.

OTH. That is a fault :
That handkerchief
Did an Egyptian to my mother give ; ⁷

The hearts of old, says Othello, dictated the union of *hands*, which formerly were joined with *the hearts* of the parties in them ; but in our modern marriages, *hands* alone are united, without *hearts*. Such evidently is the plain meaning of the words. I do not, however, undertake to maintain that the poet, when he used the word *heraldry*, had not the new order of baronets in his thoughts, without intending any satirical allusion. MALONE.

⁶ ——— *salt and sullen rheum* ———] Thus the quarto, 1622. The folio, for *sullen*, has *sorry*. MALONE.

Sullen, that is, a *rheum* *obstinately troublesome*. I think this better. JOHNSON.

⁷ *That handkerchief*

Did an Egyptian to my mother give ;] In the account of this tremendous handkerchief, are some particulars, which lead me to think that here is an allusion to a fact, heightened by poetical imagery. It is the practice in the eastern regions, for persons of both sexes to carry handkerchiefs very curiously wrought. In the MS. papers of Sir John Chardin, that great oriental traveller, is a passage which fully describes the custom. “ The mode of wrought handkerchiefs (says this learned enquirer), is general in Arabia, in Syria, in Palestine, and generally in all the Turkish empire. They are wrought with a needle, and it is the amusement of the fair sex there, as among us the making tapestry and lace. The young women make them for their fathers, their brothers, and by way of preparation before hand for their spouses, bestowing them as favours on their lovers. They have them almost constantly in their hands in those warm countries, to wipe off sweat.” But whether this

She was a charmer,⁹ and could almost read
 The thoughts of people: she told her, while she
 kept it,
 'Twould make her amiable, and subdue my father
 Entirely to her love; but if she lost it,
 Or made a gift of it, my father's eye
 Should hold her loathly, and his spirits should hunt
 After new fancies: She, dying, gave it me;
 And bid me, when my fate would have me wive,
 To give it her. I did so: and take heed of't,
 Make it a darling like your precious eye;
 To lose or give't away,² were such perdition,
 As nothing else could match.

Des.

Is it possible?

circumstance ever came to Shakspeare's knowledge, and gave rise to the incident, I am not able to determine. WHALLEY.

Shakspeare found in Cinthio's novel the incident of Desdemona's losing a handkerchief finely wrought in Morisco work, which had been presented to her by her husband, or rather of its being stolen from her by the villain who afterwards by his machinations robbed her of her life. The eastern custom of brides presenting such gifts to their husbands, certainly did not *give rise* to the incident on which this tragedy turns, though Shakspeare should seem to have been apprized of it. However the preceding note is retained as illustrative of the passage before us. MALONE.

⁹ *She was a charmer,*] In *Dent*. xviii. 11. there is an injunction, "Let none be found among you that is a *charmer*." In *Perkins's Discourse of the Damned Art of Witchcraft*, 8vo. 1610, it is said that "Inchantment is the working of wonders by a *charme*;" and a *charm* is afterwards defined, "a spell or verse, consisting of strange words, used as a signe or watchword to the Devil to cause him to worke wonders." In this *Discourse* is an enumeration of the wonders done by inchanters, as raising storms and tempests, &c. and at the conclusion it is said, "—by witches we understand not those only which kill and torment, but all diviners, *charmers*, jugglers, all wizzards, commonly called wise men and wise women; yea, whosoever do any thing (knowing what they do) which cannot be effected by nature or art." REED.

² *To lose or give't away,*] Thus the quarto, 1622. The folio—*To lose't &c.* STEEVENS.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 563

OTH. 'Tis true: there's magick in the web of it:
A sibyl,³ that had number'd in the world
The sun to make⁴ two hundred compasses,
In her prophetick fury sew'd the work:
The worms were hallow'd, that did breed the silk;
And it was dy'd in mummy,⁵ which the skilful
Conserv'd of maidens' hearts.⁶

³ *A sibyl, &c.*] This circumstance perhaps is imitated by Ben Jonson in *The Sad Shepherd*:

"A Gypsie lady, and a right beldame,
"Wrought it by moonshine for me, and star-light," &c.
STEEVENS.

⁴ — number'd —

The sun to make &c.] Thus the quarto, 1622. The folio — to course. STEEVENS.

That is, numbered the sun's courses: badly expressed.

WARBURTON.

The expression is not very infrequent: we say, *I counted the clock to strike four*; so the number'd the sun to course, to run two hundred compasses, two hundred annual circuits. JOHNSON.

I have preferred the original reading, because we have in *Hamlet*:

"When yon same star, that's eastward from the pole,
"Had made his course, to illume that part of heaven."

MALONE.

⁵ *And it was dy'd in mummy,*] The balsamick liquor running from mummies was formerly celebrated for its anti-epileptick virtues. We are now wise enough to know, that the qualities ascribed to it are all imaginary; and yet this fanciful medicine still holds a place in the principal shops where drugs are sold. So, in *The Bird in a Cage*, by Shirley, 1633.

"— make mummy of my flesh, and sell me to the apothecaries."

Again, in *The Honest Lawyer*, 1616:

"That I might tear their flesh in mammoeks, raise

"My losses, from their carcases turn'd mummy."

Mummy, however, is still much coveted by painters, as a transparent brown colour that throws a warmth into their shadows.

STEEVENS.

⁶ — which the skilful

Conserv'd of maidens' hearts.] Thus the folio. The quarto reads:

— with the skilful

Conserves, &c. STEEVENS.

DES. Indeed! is't true?

OTH. Most veritable; therefore look to't well.

DES. Then 'would to heaven, that I had never seen it.

OTH. Ha! wherefore?

DES. Why do you speak so startlingly and rash?⁶

OTH. Is't lost? is't gone? speak, is it out of the way?

DES. Heaven blefs us!

OTH. Say you?

DES. It is not lost; But what an if it were?

OTH. Ha!

DES. I say, it is not lost.

OTH. Fetch't, let me see it.

DES. Why, so I can, sir, but I will not now;
This is a trick, to put me from my suit;
I pray, let Cassio be receiv'd again.

OTH. Fetch me that handkerchief: my mind misgives.

DES. Come, come;
You'll never meet a more sufficient man.

OTH. The handkerchief,—

DES. I pray, talk me of Cassio.⁷

OTH. The handkerchief,—

DES. A man that, all his time,
Hath founded his good fortune on your love;
Shar'd dangers with you;—

OTH. The handkerchief,—

⁶ — *rash?*] is *vehement, violent*. JOHNSON.

⁷ *I pray, talk me of Cassio.*] This and the following short speech are omitted in all ancient editions but the first quarto.

STEEVENS.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 565

DES. In sooth,
You are to blame.

OTH. Away! [Exit OTHELLO.]

EMIL. Is not this man jealous?

DES. I ne'er saw this before.
Sure, there's some wonder in this handkerchief:
I am most unhappy in the loss of it.

EMIL. 'Tis not a year or two shows us a man:^{*}
They are all but stomachs, and we all but food;
They eat us hungrily, and when they are full,
They belch us. Look you! Cassio, and my husband.

Enter IAGO and CASSIO.

IAGO. There is no other way; 'tis she must do't;
And, lo, the happiness! go, and impórtune her.

DES. How now, good Cassio? what's the news
with you?

^{*} 'Tis not a year or two shows us a man:] From this line it may be conjectured, that the author intended the action of this play to be considered as longer than is marked by any note of time. Since their arrival at Cyprus, to which they were hurried on their wedding-night, the fable seems to have been in one continual progress, nor can I see any vacuity into which a *year or two*, or even a month or two, could be put. On the night of Othello's arrival, a feast was proclaimed; at that feast Cassio was degraded, and immediately applies to Desdemona to get him restored. Iago, indeed advises Othello to hold him off awhile, but there is no reason to think, that he has been held off long. A little longer interval would increase the probability of the story, though it might violate the rules of the drama. See Act V. sc. ii. JOHNSON.

This line has no reference to the duration of the action of this play, or to the length of time that Desdemona had been married. What Emilia says, is a sort of proverbial remark, of general application, where a definite time is put for an indefinite. Besides, there is no necessity for fixing the commencement of Emilia's *year or two*, to the time of the marriage or the opening of the piece. She would with more propriety refer to the beginning of the acquaintance and intimacy between the married couple, which might extend beyond that period. STEEVENS.

CAS. Madam, my former suit: I do beseech you,
 That, by your virtuous means, I may again
 Exist, and be a member of his love,
 Whom I, with all the duty of my heart,⁹
 Entirely honour; I would not be delay'd:
 If my offence be of such mortal kind,
 That neither service past, nor present sorrows,
 Nor purpos'd merit in futurity,
 Can ransom me into his love again,
 But to know so must be my benefit;²
 So shall I clothe me in a forc'd content,
 And shut myself up in some other course,
 To fortune's alms.³

⁹ — *the duty of my heart,*] The elder quarto reads,
 ——— *the duty of my heart,*——.

The author used the more proper word, and then changed it I suppose, for fashionable diction; [“the *office* of my heart,” the reading of the folio;] but, as fashion is a very weak protectress, the old word is now ready to resume its place. JOHNSON.

A careful comparison of the quartos and folio inclines me to believe that many of the variations which are found in the later copy, did not come from the pen of Shakspeare. See p. 314, n. 4. That *duty* was the word intended here, is highly probable from other passages in his works. So, in his 26th Sonnet:

“Lord of my love, to whom in vassalage

“Thy merit has my *duty* strongly knit.”

Again, in his Dedication of *Lucrece*, to Lord Southampton:
 “Were my worth greater, my *duty* would shew greater; mean
 time, as it is, it is bound to your lordship.” MALONE.

Office may be the true reading. So, in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

“—— his goodly eyes—now turn

“The *office* and devotion of their view,” &c. STEEVENS.

² But to know so must be my benefit;]

“Si nequeo placidas affari Cæsaris aures,

“Saltem aliquis veniat, qui mihi dicat, abi.” JOHNSON.

³ And shut myself up in some other course,
 To fortune's alms.] *Shut* is the reading of one of the early
 quartos. The folio, and all the modern editions, have—

And shut myself up——. JOHNSON.

I cannot help thinking this reading to be the true one. The

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 567

DES. Alas! thrice-gentle Cassio,

idea seems taken from the confinement of a monastick life. The words, *forc'd content*, help to confirm the supposition. The meaning will therefore be, "I will put on a constrained appearance of being contented, and shut myself up in a different course of life, no longer to depend on my own efforts, but to wait for relief from the accidental hand of charity."

Shakspeare uses the same expression in *Macbeth* :

" ———— and *shut up*
" In measureless content."

Again, in *All's well that ends well* :

" Whose basest stars do *shut us up* in wishes."

STEEVENS.

The quarto, 1622, reads—And *shoot* myself &c. I think, with Mr. Steevens, that it was a corruption, and that the reading of the folio is the true one.

Hanmer reads :

*And shoot myself upon some other course,
To fortune's alms.*

To fortune's alms means, waiting patiently for whatever bounty fortune or chance may bestow upon me.

We have the same uncommon phrase in *King Lear* :

" ———— Let your study
" Be to content your lord, who hath receiv'd you
" *At fortune's alms.*" MALONE.

I cannot agree with Steevens in approving of the present reading, nor of course, in his explanation of this passage, but think the quarto right, which reads *shoot* instead of *shut*.—To say that a man will shut himself up in a course of life, is language such as Shakspeare would never make use of, even in his most whimsical or licentious moments.

One of the meanings of the verb *to shoot*, is to *push suddenly*, or to *push forward*; and in that sense it is used in this place. Cassio means to say, that if he finds he has no chance of regaining the favour of the general, he will push forward into some other line of life, and seek his fortune; but I think it probable we ought to read :

And shoot myself upon some other course,
instead of *up in* some other course. M. MASON.

Mr. M. Mason's explanation is a very forced one.—It appears from the information of Iago, that Cassio had not long been a soldier. Before Othello promoted him, for his good offices in respect to Desdemona, he was "a great arithmetician, a counter-caster;" and now, being discarded from the military line, he pur-

My advocacy is not now in tune;
 My lord is not my lord; nor should I know him,
 Were he in favour,⁴ as in humour, alter'd.
 So help me every spirit sanctified,
 As I have spoken for you all my best;
 And stood within the blank of his displeasure;⁵
 For my free speech! You must a while be patient:
 What I can do, I will; and more I will,
 Than for myself I dare: let that suffice you.

IAGO. Is my lord angry?

EMIL. He went hence but now,
 And, certainly, in strange unquietness.

IAGO. Can he be angry? I have seen the cannon,
 When it hath blown his ranks into the air;⁶
 And, like the devil, from his very arm
 Puff'd his own brother;—And can he be angry?
 Something of moment, then: I will go meet him;
 There's matter in't indeed, if he be angry.

DES. I pr'ythee, do so.—Something, sure, of
 state,— [Exit IAGO.
 Either from Venice; or some unhatch'd practice;⁷
 Made démonstrable here in Cyprus to him,—

poses to *confine* or *shut himself up*, as he formerly had, within the limits of a new profession. HENLEY.

⁴ — in favour,] In look, in countenance. JOHNSON.

See p. 446, n. 5. STEEVENS.

⁵ — within the blank of his displeasure,] Within the spot of his anger. JOHNSON.

See p. 245, n. 3. STEEVENS.

⁶ — I have seen the cannon,
 When it hath blown &c.] In Iago's speech something is suppressed. He means to say, I have seen his ranks blown into the air, and his own brother puff'd from his side,—and mean while have seen him quite cool and unruffled. And can he now be angry?

MALONE.

⁷ — some unhatch'd practice,] Some treason that has not taken effect. JOHNSON.

Hath puddled his clear spirit: and, in such cases,
Men's natures wrangle with inferior things,
Though great ones are their object. 'Tis even so;
For let our finger ach, and it indues
Our other healthful members ev'n to that sense
Of pain:⁸ Nay, we must think, men are not gods;
Nor of them look for such observances
As fit the bridal.⁹—Beshrew me much, Emilia,
I was (unhandsome warrior as I am,²)
Arraigning his unkindness with my foul;
But now I find, I had suborn'd the witness,
And he's indited falsely.

EMIL. Pray heaven, it be state matters, as you
think;

⁸ For let our finger ach, and it indues

Our other healthful members ev'n to that sense

Of pain:] I believe it should be rather, Subdues our other
healthful members to a sense of pain. JOHNSON.

Dr. Johnson's conjecture may be supported by a passage in one
of Desdemona's speeches to the Senate:

" — my heart's subdued

" Even to the very quality of my lord."

Again in p. 562:

" — and subdue my father

" Entirely to her love." STEEVENS.

To *indue* appears to have signified in Shakspeare's time, to *tincture*,
or *embrew*, and is so used here. See p. 296, n. 7.

The words—'Tis even so, relate to what Desdemona has just con-
jectured. "This is certainly the case; some state affair has disturbed
him." MALONE.

How a member is to be *tinctured* or *embrewed* to any particular
sensation, I am glad it is not my office to explain. STEEVENS.

⁹ — the bridal.] i. e. the nuptial feast; a Saxon word. So,
in *Gamelyn, or the Cook's Tale*:

" At every *bridale* he would sing and hop." STEEVENS.

² — (unhandsome warrior as I am,)] *Unhandsome warrior*, is
evidently *unfair assailant*. JOHNSON.

See note on the same expression, Act II. sc. i. STEEVENS.

And on conception, nor no jealous toy,
Concerning you.

DES. Alas, the day! I never gave him cause.

EMIL. But jealous souls will not be answer'd so;
They are not ever jealous for the cause,
But jealous for they are jealous: 'tis a monster,
Begot upon itself, born on itself.

DES. Heaven keep that monster from Othello's
mind!

EMIL. Lady, amen.

DES. I will go seek him.—Cassio walk here-
about:

If I do find him fit, I'll move your suit,
And seek to effect it to my uttermost.

CAS. I humbly thank your ladyship.

[*Exeunt DESDEMONA and EMILIA.*]

Enter BIANCA.

BIAN. Save you friend Cassio!

CAS. What make you from home?

How is it with you, my most fair Bianca?

I'faith, sweet love, I was coming to your house.

BIAN. And I was going to your lodging, Cassio.
What! keep a week away? seven days and nights?
Eight score eight hours? and lovers' absent hours,
More tedious than the dial eight score times?
O weary reckoning!

CAS. Pardon me, Bianca;

I have this while with leaden thoughts been prefs'd;
But I shall, in a more continue time,³

³ — in a more continue time,] Thus the folio. The quarto, 1622, has—a more convenient time. MALONE.

A more continue time is time left interrupted, time which I can

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 571

Strike off this score of absence. Sweet Bianca,
 [Giving her DESDEMONA's handkerchief.
 Take me this work out.⁴

BIAN. O, Cassio, whence came this?
 This is some token from a newer friend.
 To the felt absence now I feel a cause:
 Is it come to this? Well, well.

CAS. Woman, go to!⁵
 Throw your vile guesses in the devil's teeth,
 From whence you have them. You are jealous
 now;
 That this is from some mistress, some remem-
 brance:
 No, in good troth, Bianca.

BIAN. Why, whose is it?

call more my own. It gives a more distinct image than convenient.
 JOHNSON.

The word occurs again in *Timon of Athens*, sc. i:

" ——— breath'd, as it were,

" To an untirable and *continue* goodness."

See Vol. XI. p. 464, n. 5. STEEVENS.

⁴ *Take me this work out.*] The meaning is not, "Pick out the
 work, and leave the ground plain;" but, "Copy this work in
 another handkerchief." JOHNSON:

So, in a comedy, by Middleton, called *Women beware of
 Women*:

" ——— she intends

" To *take out* other works in a new sampler."

Again, in the preface to P. Holland's Pliny, 1601: "Nicophanes
 (a famous painter) gave his mind wholly to antique pictures,
 partly to exemplify and *take out* their patterns, after that in long
 continuance of time they were decayed." Again, in Sidney's
Arcadia, Book II: "—— why dost thou in thy beautiful sampler
 set such a work for my desire to *take out*?" STEEVENS.

So, in Hearne's *Liber Niger Scaccarii*, Vol. II. p. 578, 581,
 and 585, "to *take out* the arms," means, to copy them.

TOLLET.

⁵ *Woman, go to!*] Old copies, unmetrically,

Go to, woman! STEEVENS.

CAS. I know not, sweet: I found it in my chamber.

I like the work well; ere it be demanded,
(As like enough, it will,) I'd have it copied:
Take it, and do't; and leave me for this time.

BIAN. Leave you! wherefore?

CAS. I do attend here on the general;
And think it no addition, nor my wish,
To have him see me woman'd.

BIAN. Why, I pray you?⁵

CAS. Not, that I love you not.

BIAN. But that you do not love me.
I pray you, bring me on the way a little;
And say, if I shall see you soon at night.

CAS. 'Tis but a little way, that I can bring you,
For I attend here: but I'll see you soon.

BIAN. 'Tis very good; I must be circumstanc'd.⁶
[*Exeunt.*]

⁵ *Why, I pray you?*] This and the following speech are wanting in the first quarto. STEEVENS.

⁶ — *I must be circumstanc'd.*] i. e. your civility is now grown conditional. WARBURTON.

Rather, I must give way to circumstances. M. MASON.

Particular circumstances and your own convenience have, I see, more weight with you than Bianca has. I must be postponed to these considerations. MALONE.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

The same.

Enter OTHELLO and IAGO.

IAGO. Will you think so?

OTH. Think so, Iago?

IAGO. What,
To kifs in private?

OTH. An unauthoriz'd kifs.

IAGO. Or to be naked with her friend abed,
An hour, or more, not meaning any harm?

OTH. Naked abed, Iago, and not mean harm?
It is hypocrisy against the devil:¹

They that mean virtuously, and yet do so,
The devil their virtue tempts, and they tempt
heaven.²

¹ *Naked in bed, Iago, and not mean harm?*

It is hypocrisy against the devil:] This observation seems strangely abrupt and unoccasional. We must suppose that Iago had, before they appeared in this scene, been applying cases of false comfort to Othello; as that though the parties had been even found in bed together, there might be no harm done; it might be only for the trial of their virtue; as was reported of the Romish saint, Robert D'Arbrissel and his nuns: To this we must suppose Othello here replies; and like a good protestant. For so the sentiment does but suit the character of the speaker, Shakspeare little heeds how these sentiments are circumstanced. WARBURTON.

Hypocrisy against the devil, means hypocrisy to cheat the devil. As common hypocrites cheat men, by seeming good, and yet living wickedly, these men would cheat the devil, by giving him flattering hopes, and at last avoiding the crime which he thinks them ready to commit. JOHNSON.

² *The devil their virtue tempts, and they tempt heaven.]* The true

IAGO. So they do nothing, 'tis a venial flip:
But if I give my wife a handkerchief,—

OTH. What then?

IAGO. Why, then 'tis hers, my lord; and, being
hers,
She may, I think, bestow't on any man.

OTH. She is protectress of her honour too;
May she give that?

IAGO. Her honour is an essence that's not seen;
They have it very oft, that have it not :
But, for the handkerchief,—

key to the explanation of this passage may be found in *St. Matthew*, iv. 7. The poet's idea, is, that *the devil tempts their virtues*, by stirring up their passions, and *they tempt heaven*, by placing themselves in such a situation as makes it scarcely possible to avoid falling by the gratification of them. HENLEY.

As the devil makes a trial of their virtue by often throwing temptation in their way, so they presumptuously make a trial whether the divine goodness will enable them to resist a temptation which they have voluntarily created for themselves, or abandon them to the government of their passions. MALONE.

Shakspeare had probably in view a very popular book of his time, *The Beehive of the Roman Church*. "There was an old wife, called *Julia*, which would take the young men and maides, and lay them together in a bed, And for that they should not one byte another, nor kicke backwardes with their heeles, she did lay a crucifix between them." FARMER.

More probably from Fabian's Chronicle, Part IV. ch. 141 :— "Of hym [Bishop Adhelme] it is wrytten that when he was styred by his gostly enemy to the synne of the fleshe, he to do the more tormente to hym selfe and of his body, wolde holde within his bedde by him a fayre mayden, by so longe tyme as he myght say over the hole sauter, albeit that suche holynes is no artycle of saynte Bennetis lore, nor yet for dyverse inconvenyence mooste alowed by holye doctours."

Again, and yet more appositely in Bale's *Actes of Englysh Posa-ryes*, 1548: "This Adhelmus never refused women, but wold have them commonly both at borde and at bedde, to *mocke the devyll with*," &c.—"he layed by hym *naked* the fayrest mayde he coude get" &c. STEVENS.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 575

OTH. By heaven, I would most gladly have for-
got it:—

Thou said'st,—O, it comes o'er my memory,
As doth the raven o'er the infected house,
Boding to all,⁹—he had my handkerchief.

LAGO. Ay, what of that?

OTH. That's not so good, now.

LAGO. What, if I had said, I had seen him do
you wrong?

Or heard him say,—As knaves be such abroad,
Who having, by their own importunate suit,
Or voluntary dotage of some mistress,
Convinced or supplied them,² cannot choose

⁹ *As doth the raven o'er the infected house,*

Boding to all,] So, in *King John*:

“ — confusion waits,

“ As doth the raven on a sick-fallen breast,—” STEEVENS.

— *boding to all* —] Thus all the old copies. The moderns
less grammatically,

Boding to ill — JOHNSON.

The raven was thought to be a constant attendant on a house,
in which there was infection. So, in Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*,
1633:

“ Thus like the sad presaging raven, that tolls

“ The sick man's passport in her hollow beak,

“ And in the shadow of the silent night

“ Does shake contagion from her sable wing.” MALONE.

² *Convinced or supplied them,*] I cannot understand the vulgar
reading. I read—*convinc'd or supplied*. My emendation makes
the sense of the passage easy and intelligible: that there are some
such long-tongued knaves in the world, who, if they through the
force of importunity extort a favour from their mistress, or if through
her own fondness they make her pliant to their desires, cannot help
boasting of their success. To *convince*, here, is not, as in the com-
mon acceptation, to make sensible of the truth of any thing by
reasons and arguments; but to *overcome, get the better of, &c.*

THEOBALD.

So, in *Macbeth*:

“ — his two chamberlains

“ Will I, with wine and wassel so convince.”

But they must blab—

O^TH. Hath he said any thing?

IAGO. He hath, my lord; but be you well assur'd,
No more than he'll unswear.

O^TH. What hath he said?

IAGO. 'Faith, that he did,—I know not what he
did.³

O^TH. What? what?

IAGO. Lie——

O^TH. With her?

IAGO. With her, on her; what you will.

O^TH. Lie with her! lie on her!—We say, lie on
her, when they belie her: Lie with her! that's
falsome.—Handkerchief,—confessions,—handker-
chief.—To confess, and be hang'd⁴ for his labour.

Again, in the same play:

“—— their malady *convinces*

“The great assay of art.”

Dr. Farmer is of opinion that *supplied* has here the same meaning
as *supplicated*. STEEVENS.

Theobald's emendation evidently hurts, instead of improving,
the sense; for what is *supplied*, but *convinced*, i. e. subdued. *Sup-
plied* relates to the words—“voluntary dotage,” as *convinced* does
to “their own importunate suit.” *Having by their importunity
conquered the resistance of a mistress, or, in compliance with her own
request, and in consequence of her unsolicited fondness, gratified her de-
sires.* MALONE.

Supplied is certainly the true reading, and with a sense that may
be collected from the following passage in *Measure for Measure*:

“And did *supply* thee at the garden-house.” STEEVENS.

³ 'Faith, that he did,—I know not what he did.] I believe that the
line should be pointed thus:

'Faith, that he did I know not what;—he did. M. MASON.

⁴ —— To confess, and be hang'd ——] This is a proverbial say-
ing. It is used by Marlowe, in his *Jew of Malta*, 1633:

“Blame us not, but the proverb—*Confessi, and be hang'd.*”

It occurs again, in *The Travels of the Three English Brothers*,

—First, to be hang'd, and then to confefs:—I tremble at it. Nature would not invest herself in fuch shadowing paffion,' without fome instruction.⁶

1607 : And in one of the old collections of fmall poems there is an epigram on it. All that remains of this fpeech, including the words *to confefs*, is wanting in the first quarto. STEEVENS.

⁵ — *shadowing paffion*,] The modern editions have left out *paffion*. JOHNSON.

⁶ — *without fome instruction*.] The starts and broken reflections in this fpeech have something very terrible, and fhew the mind of the fpeaker to be in inexpressible agonies. But the words we are upon, when fet right, have a fublime in them that can never be enough admired. The ridiculous blunder of writing *instruction* for *induction* (for fo it fhould be read) has indeed funk it into arrant nonfense. Othello is juft going to fall into a fwoon ; and as is common for people in that circumftance, feels an unufual mift and darknefs, accompanied with horror, coming upon him. This, with vaft fublimity of thought, is compared to the feafon of the fun's eclipse, at which time the earth becomes shadowed by the *induction* or bringing over of the moon between it and the fun. This being the allufion, the reasoning ftands thus : " My nature could never be thus overshadowed, and falling, as it were, into diffolution, for no caufe. There muft be an *induction* of something : there muft be a real caufe. My jealousy cannot be merely imaginary. Ideas, *words* only, could not fhake me thus, and raife all this diforder. My jealousy therefore muft be grounded on matter of fact." Shakspeare ufes this word in the fame fenfe, in *King Richard III* :

" A dire *induction* am I witnefs to."

Marfton feems to have read it thus in fome copy, and to allude to it in thefe words of his *Fame* :

" Plots ha' you laid ? *inductions* dangerous !"

WARBURTON.

This is a noble conjecture, and whether right or wrong does honour to its author. Yet I am in doubt whether there is any neceffity of emendation. There has always prevailed in the world an opinion, that when any great calamity happens at a diftance, notice is given of it to the fufferer by fome dejection or perturbation of mind, of which he difcovers no external caufe. This is afcribed to that general communication of one part of the univerfe with another, which is called fympathy and antipathy ; or to the fecret monition, *instruction*, and influence of a fuperior Being, which fuperintends the order of nature and of life. Othello fays, *Nature*

It is not words, that shake me thus:—Pish!—
Noses, ears, and lips:—Is it possible?—Confess!—
Handkerchief!—O devil!— [Falls in a trance.

IAGO. Work on,

could not invest herself in such shadowing passion without instruction. It is not words that shake me thus. This passion, which spreads in clouds over me, is the effect of some agency more than the operation of words; it is one of those notices, which men have, of unseen calamities. JOHNSON.

Nature could not invest herself in such shadowing passion without some instruction.] However ingenious Dr. Warburton's note may be, it is certainly too forced and far-fetched. Othello alludes only to Cassio's dream, which had been invented and told him by Iago. When many confused and very interesting ideas pour in upon the mind all at once, and with such rapidity that it has not time to shape or digest them, if it does not relieve itself by tears (which we know it often does, whether for joy or grief) it produces stupefaction and fainting.

Othello, in broken sentences and single words, all of which have a reference to the cause of his jealousy, shows, that all the proofs are present at once to his mind, which so over-powers it, that he falls into a trance, the natural consequence.

SIR J. REYNOLDS.

If Othello by the words *shadowing passion* alludes to his own feelings, and not to Cassio's dream, Dr. Warburton's interpretation, if we substitute *instruction* for *induction*, (which was introduced merely to usher in the image of an eclipse) is perhaps nearly correct. *Induction*, in Shakspeare's time, meant introduction, or prelude, (as in the instance quoted from *King Richard III.*) and at no time signified *bringing over*, as Dr. Warburton interprets it. MALONE.

I believe, the text, as it stands, is perfectly right, and that Othello's allusion is to his present and uncommon sensations.

STEEVENS.

7 Noses, ears, and lips:] Othello is imagining to himself the familiarities which he supposes to have passed between Cassio and his wife. So, in *The Winter's Tale*:

“Cheek to cheek,—meeting noses—

“Kissing with inside lip,” &c.—

If this be not the meaning, we must suppose he is meditating a cruel punishment for Desdemona and her suspected paramour:

“—— raptis

“*Auribus, et truncas inhonesto vulnere naves.*”

STEEVENS.

THE MOOR OF VENICE 579

My medicine, work! Thus credulous fools are caught;
And many worthy and chaste dames, even thus,
All guiltless meet reproach.—What, ho! my lord!

Enter CASSIO.

My lord, I say! Othello!—How now, Cassio?

CAS. What is the matter?

IAGO. My lord is fallen into an epilepsy;
This is his second fit; he had one yesterday.

CAS. Rub him about the temples.

IAGO. No, forbear:
The lethargy must have his quiet course:
If not, he foams at mouth; and, by and by,
Breaks out to savage madness. Look, he stirs:
Do you withdraw yourself a little while,
He will recover straight; when he is gone,
I would on great occasion speak with you.—

[Exit CASSIO.]

How is it, general? have you not hurt your head?

OTH. Dost thou mock me?

IAGO. I mock you! no, by heaven:
Would, you would bear your fortunes like a man.

OTH. A horned man's a monster, and a beast.

IAGO. There's many a beast then in a populous
city,
And many a civil monster.

OTH. Did he confess it?

IAGO. Good sir, be a man;
Think, every bearded fellow, that's but yok'd,
May draw with you: there's millions now alive,

That nightly lie in those improper beds,¹
 Which they dare swear peculiar; your case is better.
 O, 'tis the spite of hell, the fiend's arch-mock,
 To lip a wanton² in a secure couch,³
 And to suppose her chaste! No, let me know;
 And, knowing what I am, I know what she shall
 be.³

OTH. O, thou art wife; 'tis certain.

IAGO. Stand you a while apart;
 Confine yourself but in a patient list.⁴

¹ — in those improper beds,] *Unproper*, for common.

WARBURTON.

So, in *The Arcadia*, by Shirley, 1640:

"Every woman shall be common.—

"Every woman common! what shall we do with all the
proper women in *Arcadia*?

"They shall be common too."

Again, in Gower *De Confessione Amantis*, B. II. fol.—

"And is his *proper* by the lawe."

Again, in *The Maske*, &c. an ancient collection of epigrams
 and satires, no date:

"Rose is a fayre, but not a *proper* woman;

"Can any creature *proper* be, that's common?"

STEEVENS.

² To lip a wanton —] This phrase occurs in *Eastward Ho*,
 Act I:

"— lip her, lip her, knave." REED.

³ — in a secure couch,] In a couch in which he is lulled into
 a false security and confidence in his wife's virtue. A Latin sense.
 So, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*: "Though Page be a *secure*
 fool, and stands so firmly on his wife's frailty," &c.

See also Vol. XI. p. 384, n. 2. MALONE.

⁴ And, knowing what I am, I know what she shall be.] Redundancy of metre, without improvement of sense, inclines me to consider the word *she*, in this line, as an intruder. Iago is merely stating an imaginary case as his own. *When I know what I am* (says he) *I know what the result of that conviction shall be.* To whom, indeed, could the pronoun *she*, grammatically, refer?

STEEVENS.

⁴ — list.] *List*, or *lists*, is *barriers*, *bounds*. Keep your temper, says Iago, within the *bounds* of *patience*.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 581

Whilst you were here, ere while mad with your
grief,⁵

(A passion most unsuited such a man,)
Cassio came hither : I shifted him away,
And laid good 'scuse upon your ecstasy;
Bade him anon return, and here speak with me;
The which he promis'd. Do but encave yourself,⁶
And mark the fleers, the gibes, and notable scorns,
That dwell in every region of his face;⁷
For I will make him tell the tale anew,—
Where, how, how oft, how long ago, and when

So, in *Hamlet* :

“ The ocean over-peering of his *lift*,

“ Eats not the flats with more impetuous haste,” &c.

COLLINS.

Again, in *King Henry V.* Act V. sc. ii : “ — you and I cannot be confined within the weak *lift* of a country fashion.”

Again, in *King Henry IV.* P. I :

“ The very *lift*, the very utmost bound,

“ Of all our fortunes.”

Again, in *All's Well that Ends Well*, Act II. sc. i : “ — you have restrain'd yourself within the *lift* of too cold an adieu.”

Chapman, in his translation of the 16th Book of Homer's *Odyssey*, has thus expressed an idea similar to that in the text :

“ — let thy heart

“ Beat in fix'd *confines* of thy bosom still.”

STEEVENS.

⁵ — *ere while mad with your grief*,] Thus the first quarto.
The folio reads :

— o'erwhelmed with your grief. STEEVENS.

⁶ — *encave yourself*,] Hide yourself in a private place.

JOHNSON.

⁷ *That dwell in every region of his face* ;] Congreve might have had this passage in his memory, when he made Lady Touchwood say to Maskwell—“ Ten thousand meanings lurk in each corner of *that* various face.” STEEVENS.

— *region of his face* ;] The same uncommon expression occurs again in *King Henry VIII* :

“ — The respite shook

“ The bosom of my conscience—

“ — and made to tremble

“ The *region* of my breast.” MALONE.

He hath, and is again to cope your wife;
 I say, but mark his gesture. Marry, patience;
 Or I shall say, you are all in all in spleen,*
 And nothing of a man.

Oth. Dost thou hear, Iago?
 I will be found most cunning in my patience;
 But (dost thou hear?) most bloody.

Iago. That's not amiss;
 But yet keep time in all. Will you withdraw?
 [OTHELLO withdraws.]

Now will I question Cassio of Bianca,
 A housewife, that, by selling her desires,
 Buys herself bread and clothes: it is a creature,
 That dotes on Cassio,—as 'tis the strumpet's plague,
 To beguile many, and be beguil'd by one;—
 He, when he hears of her, cannot refrain
 From the excess of laughter:—Here he comes:—

Re-enter CASSIO.

As he shall smile, Othello shall go mad;
 And his unbookish jealousy⁹ must construe
 Poor Cassio's smiles, gestures, and light behaviour,
 Quite in the wrong.—How do you now, lieutenant?

Cas. The worser, that you give me the addition,
 Whose want even kills me.

* Or I shall say, you're all in all in spleen,] I read:

“Or shall I say, you're all in all a spleen.”

I think our author uses this expression elsewhere. JOHNSON.

“A hare-brain'd Hotspur, govern'd by a spleen.”—The old reading, however, is not inexplicable. We still say, such a one is in wrath, in the dumps, &c. The sense therefore is plain.

Again, in *A Midsummer's-Night's Dream*:

“That, in a spleen, unfolds both heaven and earth.”—

STEEVENS.

⁹ And his unbookish jealousy —] Unbookish, for ignorant.

WARBURTON.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 583

IAGO. Ply Desdemona well, and you are sure of't.
Now, if this suit lay in Bianca's power,
[Speaking lower.

How quickly should you speed?

CAS. Alas, poor caitiff!

OTH. Look, how he laughs already! [Aside.

IAGO. I never knew a woman love man so.

CAS. Alas, poor rogue! I think, i'faith, she loves me.

OTH. Now he denies it faintly, and laughs it out.
[Aside.

IAGO. Do you hear, Cassio?

OTH. Now he importunes him
To tell it o'er: Go to; well said, well said.
[Aside.

IAGO. She gives it out, that you shall marry her:
Do you intend it?

CAS. Ha, ha, ha!

OTH. Do you triumph, Roman? do you triumph?^a
[Aside.

CAS. I marry her!—what? a customer!^b I pr'ythee,
bear some charity to my wit; do not think it so
unwholesome. Ha, ha, ha!

OTH. So, so, so, so: They laugh, that win.
[Aside.

IAGO. 'Faith, the cry goes, that you shall marry
her.

^a *Do you triumph, Roman? do you triumph?*] Othello calls him Roman ironically. *Triumph*, which was a Roman ceremony, brought Roman into his thoughts. *What* (says he) *you are now triumphing as great as a Roman?* JOHNSON.

^b — *a customer!*] A common woman, one that invites custom.
JOHNSON.

So, in *All's well that ends well*:

“ I think thee now some common *customer*.” STEEVENS.

CAS. Pr'ythee, say true.

IAGO. I am a very villain else.

OTH. Have you scored me?⁴ Well. [Aside.

CAS. This is the monkey's own giving out: she is persuaded I will marry her, out of her own love and flattery, not out of my promise.

OTH. Iago beckons me; now he begins the story. [Aside.

CAS. She was here even now; she haunts me in every place. I was, the other day, talking on the sea-bank with certain Venetians; and thither comes the bauble; by this hand,⁵ she falls thus about my neck;—

⁴ *Have you scored me?*] Have you made my reckoning? have you settled the term of my life? The old quarto reads—*scored me*. Have you disposed of me? have you laid me up? JOHNSON.

To *score* originally meant no more than to cut a notch upon a tally, or to mark out a form by indenting it on any substance. Spenser, in the first Canto of his *Faery Queen*, speaking of the Cross, says:

“ Upon his shield the like was also *scor'd*.”

Again, Book II. c. ix:

“ ——— why on your shield, so goodly *scor'd*,

“ Bear you the picture of that lady's head?”

But it was soon figuratively used for setting a *brand* or *mark* of disgrace on any one. “ Let us *score* their backs,” says Scarus, in *Antony and Cleopatra*; and it is employed in the same sense on the present occasion. STEEVENS.

In *Antony and Cleopatra*, we find:

“ ——— I know not

“ What *counts* harsh fortune *casts* upon my face,” &c.

But in the passage before us our poet might have been thinking of the ignominious punishment of slaves. So, in his *Rape of Lucrece*:

“ Worfe than a *slawish wipe*, or birth-hour's blot.”

MALONE.

I suspect that—*wipe*, in the foregoing passage from *The Rape of Lucrece*, was a typographical depravation of—*wipe*. See Vol. X. p. 270, n. 4. STEEVENS.

⁵ ——— *by this hand*,] This is the reading of the first quarto.

STEEVENS.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 585

OTH. Crying, O dear Cassio! as it were: his gesture imports it. [Aside.

CAS. So hangs, and lolls, and weeps upon me; so hales, and pulls me: ha, ha, ha!—

OTH. Now he tells, how she pluck'd him to my chamber: O, I see that nose of yours, but not that dog I shall throw it to. [Aside.

CAS. Well, I must leave her company.

IAGO. Before me! look, where she comes.

Enter BIANCA.

CAS. 'Tis such another fitchew!⁴ marry, a perfumed one.—What do you mean by this haunting of me?

BIAN. Let the devil and his dam haunt you! What did you mean by that same handkerchief, you gave me even now? I was a fine fool to take it. I must take out the whole work?—A likely piece of work, that you should find it in your chamber, and not know who left it there! This is some minx's token, and I must take out the work? There,—give it your hobby-horse: wheresoever you had it, I'll take out no work on't.

CAS. How now, my sweet Bianca? how now? how now?

Instead of which, the editor of the folio, or rather the licenser of plays, substituted—thither comes the bauble, *and falls me* thus, &c. MALONE.

⁶ — *fitchew*!] A polecat. POPE.

Shakspeare has in another place mentioned the lust of this animal. He tells Iago, that she is as lewd as the *polecat*, but of better scent, the polecat being a very stinking animal. JOHNSON.

By “another place,” Dr. Johnson means—*King Lear*:

“The *fitchew*, nor the soiled horse, goes to't

“With a more riotous appetite.”

A *polecat* therefore was anciently one of the cant terms for a strumpet. STEEVENS.

OTH. By heaven, that should be my handkerchief!

[*Aside.*

BIAN. An you'll come to supper to-night, you may: an you will not, come when you are next prepared for.

[*Exit.*

IAGO. After her, after her.

CAS. 'Faith I must, she'll rail in the street else.

IAGO. Will you sup there?

CAS. 'Faith, I intend so.

IAGO. Well, I may chance to see you; for I would very fain speak with you.

CAS. Pr'ythee, come; Will you?

IAGO. Go to; say no more. [*Exit CASSIO.*

OTH. How shall I murder him, Iago?

IAGO. Did you perceive how he laugh'd at his vice?

OTH. O, Iago!

IAGO. And did you see the handkerchief?

OTH. Was that mine?

IAGO. Yours, by this hand:⁷ and to see how he prizes the foolish woman, your wife! she gave it him, and he hath given it his whore.

OTH. I would have him nine years a killing:—
A fine woman! a fair woman! a sweet woman!

IAGO. Nay, you must forget that.

OTH. Ay, let her rot, and perish, and be damn'd to-night; for she shall not live: No, my heart is turn'd to stone; I strike it, and it hurts my hand.⁸

⁷ *Yours, by this hand:*] This speech is not in the original quarto, 1622. MALONE.

⁸ *No, my heart is turn'd to stone; I strike it, and it hurts my hand.*] This thought, as often as it occurs to Shakspeare, is sure to be

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O, the world hath not a sweeter creature: she might lie by an emperor's side, and command him talks.

IAGO. Nay, that's not your way.

OTH. Hang her! I do but say what she is:—So delicate with her needle!—An admirable musician! O, she will sing the savageness out of a bear!¹—Of so high and plenteous wit and invention!—

IAGO. She's the worse for all this.

OTH. O, a thousand, a thousand times:—And then, of so gentle a condition!²—

IAGO. Ay, too gentle.

OTH. Nay, that's certain: But yet the pity of it, Iago!—O, Iago, the pity of it, Iago!

IAGO. If you are so fond over her iniquity, give her patent to offend;³ for, if it touch not you, it comes near nobody.

OTH. I will chop her into messes:—Cuckold me!

IAGO. O, tis foul in her.

OTH. With mine officer!

received, and as often counteracts his *pathos*. So, in *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act IV. sc. viii:

“ ——— throw my heart

“ Against the flint and hardness of my fault,

“ Which, being dried with grief, will break to powder,

“ And finish all foul thoughts.” STEEVENS.

¹ ——— O, *she would sing the savageness out of a bear!*] So, in *Venus and Adonis*:

“ ——— when he hath sung,

“ *The tiger would be tame.*” MALONE.

² ——— *And then, of so gentle a condition!*] i. e. of so sweet a disposition. So, in *King Henry V*: “ Our tongue is rough, coz, and my condition is not smooth.” MALONE.

³ *If you are so fond over her iniquity, give her patent to offend;*] So, in *King Edward III.* a tragedy, 1596:

“ Why then give *sin* a passport, to offend.” MALONE.

IAGO. That's fouler.

OTH. Get me some poison, Iago; this night:—
I'll not expostulate with her, lest her body and
beauty unprovide my mind again:—this night,
Iago.

IAGO. Do it not with poison; strangle her in her
bed, even the bed she hath contaminated.

OTH. Good, good: the justice of it pleases; very
good.

IAGO. And, for Cassio,—let me be his under-
taker: You shall hear more by midnight.

[*A trumpet within.*]

OTH. Excellent good.—What trumpet is that
fame?

IAGO. Something from Venice, sure. 'Tis Lo-
dovico,
Come from the duke: and, see, your wife is with
him.

Enter LODOVICO, DESDEMONA, *and Attendants.*

LOD. 'Save you, worthy general!

OTH. With all my heart, sir.⁴

⁴ *With all my heart, sir.*] This does not relate to what *Lodovico*
has just said, but is spoken by *Othello* while he salutes him.

MALONE.

I know not how the meaning of this speech can be ascertained,
unless by reference to the salutation of *Lodovico*.

The distracted *Othello*, considering his own happiness at an end
in this world, readily catches at the idea of future felicity suggested
by the words—" 'Save you, general! "

In his present reply, therefore, he must be supposed to welcome
the pious wish expressed on his behalf.

In *Measure for Measure*, two replies of *Angelo*, equally equivocal,
are derived from similar premises:

" *Isab.* Heaven keep your honour safe!

" *Ang.* Amen."

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LOD. The duke and senators of Venice greet you.

[Gives him a packet.

OTH. I kiss the instrument of their pleasures.

[Opens the packet, and reads.

DES. And what's the news, good cousin Lodovico?

IAGO. I am very glad to see you, signior;
Welcome to Cyprus.

LOD. I thank you: How does lieutenant Cassio?

IAGO. Lives, sir.

DES. Cousin, there's fallen between him and my lord

An unkind breach: but you shall make all well.

OTH. Are you sure of that?

DES. My lord?

OTH. *This fail you not to do, as you will—*
[Reads.

LOD. He did not call; he's busy in the paper.
Is there division 'twixt thy lord and Cassio?

DES. A most unhappy one; I would do much
To atone them,^s for the love I bear to Cassio.

Again, at the conclusion of the same scene:

"*Isab.* 'Save your honour!

"*Ang.* From thee: even from thy virtue!"

If it be urged, that "*save you*" only means *preserve you in this world*, my sense of the passage will not be much weakened; as our protection,

"Even *here*, upon this bank and shoal of time,"
depends on the Almighty. STEEVENS.

^s — *atone them,*] Make them *one*; reconcile them.

JOHNSON.

The expression is formed by the coalescence of the words *at one*, the verb to *set*, or some equivalent being omitted. Thus, in the *Acts*: "— he showed himself to them as they strove, and would have *set* them *at one* again." And in *The Beehive of the Romists*

OTH. Fire and brimstone !

DES. My lord?

OTH. Are you wife?

DES. What, is he angry?

LOD. 'May be, the letter mov'd him;
For, as I think, they do command him home,
Deputing Cassio in his government.

DES. By my troth, I'm glad on't.

OTH. Indeed?

DES. My lord?

OTH. I am glad to see you mad.

DES. How, sweet Othello?

OTH. Devil! [Striking her.

DES. I have not deserv'd this.

LOD. My lord, this would not be believ'd in
Venice,

Though I should swear I saw it: 'Tis very much;
Make her amends, she weeps.

OTH. O devil, devil!

If that the earth could teem with woman's tears,⁶

Church: " ——— through which God is *made* AT ONE with us, and hath forgiven us our sins." HENLEY.

See Vol. XII. p. 189, n. 6. MALONE.

⁶ *If that the earth could teem &c.*] If women's tears could impregnate the earth. By the doctrine of equivocal generation, new animals were supposed producible by new combinations of matter. See Bacon. JOHNSON.

Shakspeare here alludes to the fabulous accounts of crocodiles. Each tear, says Othello, which falls from the false Desdemona, would generate a crocodile, the most deceitful of all animals, and whose own tears are proverbially fallacious. "It is written," says Bullokar, "that he will weep over a man's head when he hath devoured the body, and then he will eat up the head too. Wherefore in Latin there is a proverb, *crocodili lachrymæ*, crocodile's tears, to signify such tears as are fained, and spent only with intent to deceive, or doe harme." *Engliſh Expoſitor*, 8vo. 1616. It

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Each drop she falls⁷ would prove a crocodile:—
Out of my sight!

DES. I will not stay to offend you. [*Going.*]

Lod. Truly, an obedient lady:—
I do beseech your lordship, call her back.

OTH. Mistress,——

DES. My lord?

OTH. What would you with her, sir?

Lod. Who, I, my lord?

OTH. Ay; you did wish, that I would make her
turn:

Sir, she can turn, and turn, and yet go on,
And turn again;⁸ and she can weep, sir, weep;
And she's obedient, as you say,—obedient,—
Very obedient;—Proceed you in your tears.⁹—
Concerning this, sir,—O well-painted passion!
I am commanded home:²—Get you away;

appears from this writer, that a dead crocodile, “but in perfect
forme,” of about nine feet long, had been exhibited in London,
in our poet's time.” MALONE.

⁷ *Each drop she falls*—] To *fall* is here a verb active. So, in
The Tempest:

“——when I rear my hand, do you the like,

“To *fall* it on Gonzalo.” STEEVENS.

⁸ *Sir, she can turn, &c.*] So, in *King Henry VI.* Part I:

“Done like a Frenchman; turn and turn again.”

STEEVENS.

⁹ —— *Proceed you in your tears.*] I cannot think that the poet
meant to make Othello bid Desdemona to *continue weeping*, which
proceed you in your tears (as the passage is at present pointed) must
mean. He rather would have said:

—— *Proceed you in your tears?* ——

What! will you still continue to be a hypocrite by a display of this
well-painted passion? WARNER.

I think the old punctuation the true one. MALONE.

² *I am commanded home:*] Thus the folio. The quarto, 1622,
reads, perhaps better:

I am commanded here—Get you away, &c.

I'll fend for you anon.—Sir, I obey the mandate,
And will return to Venice;—Hence, avaunt!

[*Exit* DESDEMONA.]

Cassio shall have my place.³ And,—sir, to-night,
I do entreat that we may sup together.

You are welcome, sir, to Cyprus.—Goats and monkeys!⁴

[*Exit.*]

Lod. Is this the noble Moor, whom our full
senate

Call—all-in-all sufficient? This the noble nature
Whom passion could not shake? whose solid virtue
The shot of accident, nor dart of chance,

The alteration, I suspect, was made, from the editor of the folio not perceiving that an abrupt sentence was intended. MALONE.

I am commanded here, (without the least idea of an abrupt sentence,) may be an indignant sentiment of Othello:—"I have an officer *here* placed over my head; I am now *under the command* of another:" i. e. of Cassio, to whom the government of Cyprus was just transferred. STEEVENS.

³ *Cassio shall have my place.*] Perhaps this is addressed to Desdemona, who had just expressed her joy on hearing Cassio was deputed in the room of her husband. Her innocent satisfaction in the hope of returning to her native place, is construed by Othello into the pleasure she received from the advancement of his rival.

STEEVENS.

⁴ — *Goats and monkeys!*] In this exclamation Shakspeare has shown great art. Iago, in the first scene in which he endeavours to awaken his suspicion, being urged to give some evident proof of the guilt of Cassio and Desdemona, tells him it were impossible to have ocular demonstration of it, though they should be "as prime as *goats*, as hot as *monkeys*."—These words we may suppose, still ring in the ears of Othello, who being now fully convinced of his wife's infidelity, rushes out with this emphatick exclamation:—Iago's words were but too true; now indeed I am convinced that they are as hot as "*goats and monkeys*." MALONE.

Though the words of Othello, cited by Mr. Malone, could not have escaped the deliberate reader's memory, a reference to a distant scene, but ill agrees with the infuriation of Othello's mind. His fancy, haunted by still growing images of lewdness, would scarce have expressed its feelings in recollected phraseology. STEEVENS.

Could neither graze, nor pierce?^s

IAGO. He is much chang'd.

LOD. Are his wits safe? is he not light of brain?

IAGO. He is that he is; I may not breathe my censure.

What he might be,—if, what he might, he is not,—
I would to heaven, he were.

LOD. What, strike his wife!

IAGO. 'Faith, that was not so well; Yet 'would I
knew,

That stroke would prove the worst.

LOD. Is it his use?

^s ——— *whose solid virtue*

The shot of accident, nor dart of chance,

Could neither graze, nor pierce?] I cannot see, for my heart, the difference betwixt the shot of *accident* and dart of *chance*. The words and things they imply are purely synonymous; but that the poet intended two different things seems plain from the *discretive* adverb. Chance may afflict a man in some circumstances; but other distresses are to be accounted for from a different cause. I am persuaded our author wrote:

“The shot of *accident*, nor dart of *change*,” &c.

And, in a number of other places, our poet industriously puts these two words in opposition to each other. THEOBALD.

To *graze* is not merely to touch superficially, [as Dr. Warburton has stated] but to strike not directly, not so as to bury the body of the thing striking in the matter struck.

Theobald trifles, as is usual. *Accident* and *chance* may admit a subtle distinction; *accident* may be considered as the *act*, and *chance* as the *power* or agency of fortune; as, *It was by chance that this accident befel me*. At least, if we suppose all corrupt that is inaccurate, there will be no end of emendation. JOHNSON.

I do not see the least ground for supposing any corruption in this passage. As *pierce* relates to *the dart of chance*, so *graze* is referred to *the shot of accident*. The expression is still used; we still say—he was grazed by a bullet.

For *graze*, Dr. Warburton arbitrarily substituted—*raze*.

MALONE.

Or did the letters work upon his blood,
And new-create this fault?

IAGO. Alas, alas!
It is not honesty in me, to speak
What I have seen and known. You shall observe
him;
And his own courses will denote him so,
That I may save my speech: Do but go after,
And mark how he continues.

LORD. I am sorry, that I am deceiv'd in him.
[*Exeunt.*]

S C E N E II.

*A Room in the Castle.*⁶

Enter OTHELLO and EMILIA.

OTH. You have seen nothing then?

EMIL. Nor ever heard; nor ever did suspect.

⁶ *A Room in the Castle.*] There are great difficulties in ascertaining the place of this scene. Near the close of it, Iago says to Desdemona, "Go in, and weep not," which would lead us to place it in the court before Othello's castle. These words may indeed be explained to mean, "Go into the supper-room" (though I do not think that the meaning): but immediately afterwards Roderigo enters, and converses with Iago, which decisively ascertains the scene not to be in Othello's house: for Roderigo, who had given the first intelligence to Brabantio, of his daughter's flight, and had shortly afterwards drawn his sword on Othello and his partisans, certainly would not take the liberty of walking into his house at pleasure.

On the other hand, what Othello says early in the scene to Emilia,

"Leave procreants alone, and shut the door;"
and his subsequent address to her as he goes out, as decisively point out a room in Othello's castle as the place of the scene; and compel

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OTH. Yes, you have seen Cassio and she together.

EMIL. But then I saw no harm; and then I heard

Each syllable, that breath made up between them.

OTH. What, did they never whisper?

EMIL. Never, my lord.

OTH. Nor send you out o'the way?

EMIL. Never.

OTH. To fetch her fan, her gloves, her mask, nor nothing?

EMIL. Never, my lord.

OTH. That's strange.

EMIL. I durst, my lord, to wager she is honest,
Lay down my soul at stake: if you think other,
Remove your thought; it doth abuse your bosom.
If any wretch hath put this in your head,
Let heaven requite it with the serpent's curse!
For, if she be not honest, chaste, and true,
There's no man happy; the purest of their wives
Is foul as slander.

OTH. Bid her come hither;—go.—

[Exit EMILIA.]

She says enough;—yet she's a simple bawd,
That cannot say as much. This is a subtle whore,

us to place the several interlocutors there, however inconsistent with Roderigo's entry, and Iago's address to Desdemona.

The truth is, that our poet and his audience, in this instance as in many other, were content, from want of scenery, to consider the very same spot, at one and the same time, as the outside and inside of a house. See *The Historical Account of the English Stage, &c.* Vol. II. MALONE.

¹ — of their wives —] Thus the folio. The quarto, 1622, reads—of her sex. MALONE.

A closet-lock-and-key of villainous secrets :
And yet she'll kneel, and pray; I have seen her
do't.

Re-enter EMILIA, with DESDEMONA.

DES. My lord, what is your will?

OTH. Pray, chuck, come hither.

DES. What is your pleasure?

OTH. Let me see your eyes;
Look in my face.

DES. What horrible fancy's this?

OTH. Some of your function, mistress;

[*To EMILIA.*
Leave procreants alone, and shut the door;
Cough, or cry—hem, if any body come :
Your mystery, your mystery;—nay, despatch.

[*Exit EMILIA.*

DES. Upon my knees, what doth your speech
import?

I understand a fury in your words,
But not the words.⁸

OTH. Why, what art thou?

DES. Your wife, my lord; your true
And loyal wife.

OTH. Come, swear it, damn thyself;
Left, being like one of heaven, the devils them-
selves
Should fear to seize thee: therefore be double-
damn'd,

⁸ *But not the words.*] This line is added out of the first edition.
POPS.

Swear—thou art honest.

DES. Heaven doth truly know it.

OTH. Heaven truly knows, that thou art false as hell.

DES. To whom, my lord? With whom? How am I false?

OTH. O Desdemona!—away! away! away!

DES. Alas, the heavy day!—Why do you weep?
Am I the occasion of these tears, my lord?
If, haply, you my father do suspect,
An instrument of this your calling back,
Lay not your blame on me; if you have lost him,
Why, I have lost him too.

OTH. Had it pleas'd heaven
To try me with affliction; had he rain'd
All kinds of sores, and flames, on my bare head;
Steep'd me in poverty to the very lips;
Given to captivity me and my utmost hopes;
I should have found in some part of my soul
A drop of patience: but (alas!) to make me
A fixed figure, for the time of scorn⁹

⁹ — time of scorn &c.] The reading of both the eldest quartos and the folio is,

“ — for the time of scorn.”

Mr. Rowe reads—*hand* of scorn; and succeeding editors have silently followed him.

I would (though in opposition to so many great authorities in favour of the change) continue to read with the old copy:

“ — the time of scorn.”

We call the *hour in which we are to die*, the *hour of death*—the time when we are to be judged—the *day of judgement*—the instant when we suffer calamity—the *moment of evil*; and why may we not distinguish the time which brings contempt along with it, by the title of *the time of scorn*? Thus, in *King Richard III*:

“ Had you such leisure in *the time of death*?—,”

To point his slow unmoving finger at,—
O! O!

Again, in *Soliman and Perseda*, 1599 :

“ So sings the mariner upon the shore,
“ When he hath past the dangerous *time of storms*.”

Again, in Marston's *Insatiate Countess*, 1603 :

“ I'll poison thee ; with murder curbe thy paths,
“ And make thee know a *time of infamy*.”

Othello takes his idea from a clock. *To make me* (says he) *a fixed figure* (on the dial of the world) *for the hour of scorn to point and make a full stop at!* STEEVENS.

Might not Shakspeare have written :

“ ——— for the scorn of time
“ To point his slow unmoving finger at,”—

i. e. the marked object for the contempt of all ages and all time.
So, in *Hamlet* :

“ For who would bear the whips and *scorns of time* ?”

However, in support of the reading of the old copies, it may be observed, that our author has personified *scorn* in his 88th Sonnet :

“ When thou shalt be dispos'd to fet me light,
“ And place my merit in the *eye of scorn*—.”

The epithet *unmoving* may likewise derive some support from Shakspeare's 104th Sonnet, in which this very thought is expressed :

“ Ah! yet doth beauty, like a *dial-hand*,
“ *Steal from his figure*, and no *pace* perceiv'd;
“ So your sweet hue, which methinks *still doth stand*,
“ Hath motion, and mine eye may be deceiv'd.”

In the clocks of the last age there was, I think, in the middle of the dial-plate a figure of time, which, I believe, was in our poet's thoughts, when he wrote the passage in the text. [See Vol. VIII. p. 342, n. 9.]

The *finger* of the dial was the technical phrase. So, in *Albovine King of the Lombards*, by D'Avenant, 1629 :

“ Even as the *slow finger of the dial*
“ Doth in its *motion* circular *remove*
“ To distant figures,—.”

D'Avenant was a great reader of Shakspeare, and probably had read his plays, according to the fashion of the time, in the folio, without troubling himself to look into the quarto copies.

Unmoving is the reading of the quarto, 1622. The folio reads —and moving; and this certainly agrees with the image presented and its counterpart, better than *unmoving*, which can be applied to

Yet could I bear that too; well, very well:
But there, where I have garner'd up my heart;²
Where either I must live, or bear no life;³

a clock, only by licence of poetry, (*not appearing to move*), and as applied to *scorn*, has but little force: to say nothing of the superfluous epithet *slow*; for there needs no ghost to tell us, that that which is *unmoving* is *slow*. *Slow* implies some sort of motion, however little it may be, and therefore appears to me to favour the reading of the folio.

I have given the arguments on both sides, and, from respect to the opinion of others, have printed *unmoving*, though I am very doubtful whether it was the word intended by Shakspeare. The quarto, 1622, has—*fingers*; the folio—*finger*. MALONE.

Perhaps we should read—*slowly moving finger at*. I should wish to reject the present reading, for even the word *slow* implies some degree of motion, though that motion may not be perceptible to the eye. *The time of scorn* is a strange expression, to which, I cannot reconcile myself; I have no doubt but it is erroneous, and with we had authority to read—*hand of scorn*, instead of *time*.

M. MASON.

If a certain culprit, in one of his soliloquies (after the execution of a late sentence in the corn-market) had been heard to exclaim:

“ — but, alas! to make me
“ A fixed figure, for the time of scorn
“ To point his slow unmoving finger at,—
“ O! O!”

he would, at once, have been understood, by *the time of scorn*, to mean the HOUR of his exposure in the pillory; and by *its slow unmoving finger*, the HOUR-INDEX of the dial that fronted him.—

Mr. Malone, in a subsequent note, hath remarked that, “ *his for its* is common in our author;” and in respect to the epithet *unmoving*, it may be observed, with Rosalind, not only that *time travels in divers paces with divers persons*, but, that for the same reason, it GALLOPS with the thief to the gallows, it apparently STANDS STILL with the perjured in the pillory. Whatever were the precise instance of disgrace to which Othello alluded, the text in its present state, is perfectly intelligible; and, therefore, should be preserved from capricious alterations. HENLEY.

² — *garner'd up my heart*;] That is, *treasured up*; the *garner* and the *fountain* are improperly conjoined. JOHNSON.

³ *Where either I must live, or bear no life*;] So, in *King Lear*:
“ Whereby we do exist, or cease to be.” STEEVENS.

The fountain from the which my current runs,
Or else dries up; to be discarded thence!
Or keep it as a cistern, for foul toads⁴
To knot and gender in!—turn thy complexion
there!

Patience, thou young and rose-lipp'd cherubin;
Ay, there, look grim as hell!

DES. I hope, my noble lord esteems me honest.

OTH. O, ay; as summer flies are in the sham-
bles,

That quicken even with blowing. O thou weed,⁶
Who art so lovely fair, and smell'st so sweet,

⁴ — a cistern, for foul toads &c.] So, in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

“ So half my Egypt were submerg'd, and made

“ A cistern for scald'd snakes —.” STEEVENS.

⁵ — turn thy complexion there! &c.] At such an object do thou, *patience*, thyself change colour; at this do thou, even thou, *rosy cherub* as thou art, look as grim as hell. The old editions and the new have it:

“ I here look grim as hell.”

I was written for *ay*, and not since corrected. JOHNSON.

Here in the old copies was manifestly an error of the press. See the line next but one above. Mr. Theobald made the correction.

MALONE.

⁶ — O thou weed,] Dr. Johnson has, on this occasion, been unjustly censured for having stifled difficulties where he could not remove them. I would therefore observe, that Othello's speech is printed word for word from the folio edition, though the quarto reads:

“ O thou black weed!”

Had this epithet, *black*, been admitted, there would still have remained an incomplete verse in the speech: no additional beauty would have been introduced; but instead of it, a paltry antithesis between the words *black* and *fair*. STEEVENS.

The quarto, 1622, reads:

“ O thou black weed, why art so lovely fair?

“ Thou smell'st so sweet, that the sense aches at thee,” &c.

MALONE.

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That the sense aches at thee,—’Would, thou had’st
ne’er been born!

DES. Alas, what ignorant sin have I committed?

OTH. Was this fair paper, this most goodly book,
Made to write whore upon?⁷ What committed!
Committed!⁸—O thou publick commoner!
I should make very forges of my cheeks,
That would to cinders burn up modesty,
Did I but speak thy deeds.—What committed!
Heaven stops the nose at it, and the moon winks;
The bawdy wind, that kisses all it meets,⁹

⁷ *Was this fair paper, &c.*] Maffinger has imitated this passage in *The Emperor of the East*:

“ ——— can you think
“ This master piece of heaven, this precious vellum
“ Of such a purity and virgin whiteness,
“ Could be design’d to have perjury and whoredom
“ In capital letters writ upon’t?” STEEVENS.

⁸ *Committed!*] This, and the three following lines, are omitted in the first quarto. For the peculiar sense in which the word—*committed*, is here used, see Vol. XIV. p. 160, n. 2. See also, Decker’s *Bell-man’s Night Walkes*, &c. “ But what do they? marrie, they doe that which the Constable should have done for them both in the streets; that is to say, *commit, commit!*”

STEEVENS.

This word in Shakspeare’s time, beside its general signification, seems to have been applied particularly to unlawful acts of love.—Hence perhaps it is so often repeated by Othello.

So, in Sir Thomas Overbury’s *CHARACTERS*, (*A Very Woman*) 1614: “ She *commits* with her ears for certain; after that, she may go for a maid, but she has been lain with in her understanding.” The word is used in the same sense in *King Lear*:

“ *Commit* not with man’s sworn spouse.”

Again, in Decker’s *Honest Whore*, P. I:

“ ——— if all *committers* stood in a rank,
“ They’d make a lane, in which your shame might dwell.”

MALONE.

⁹ *The bawdy wind, that kisses all it meets,*] So, in *The Merchant of Venice*:

“ Hugg’d and embraced by the strumpet wind.”

MALONE.

Is hush'd within the hollow mine of earth,
And will not hear it : What committed !—
Impudent strumpet !

DES. By heaven, you do me wrong.

OTH. Are not you a strumpet ?

DES. No, as I am a christian :
If to preserve this vessel for my lord,^a
From any other's foul unlawful touch,
Be—not to be a strumpet, I am none.

OTH. What, not a whore ?

DES. No, as I shall be sav'd.

OTH. Is it possible ?

DES. O, heaven forgive us !

OTH. I cry you mercy, then ;
I took you for that cunning whore of Venice,
That married with Othello.—You, mistress,

Re-enter EMILIA.

That have the office opposite to Saint Peter,
And keep the gate of hell ; You ! you ! ay, you !
We have done our course ; there's money for your
pains ;

I pray you, turn the key, and keep our counsel.

[*Exit.*

EMIL. Alas, what does this gentleman conceive ?—

How do you, madam ? how do you, my good lady ?

DES. 'Faith, half asleep.

^a *If to preserve this vessel for my lord,*] This expression, as well as many others, our author has borrowed from the sacred writings :
" — to possess his vessel in sanctification,"—1 *Thess.* iv. 4.

MALONE.

³ — any other —] Thus the folio. The quarto reads—any
batred. STEEVENS.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 603

EMIL. Good madam, what's the matter with my lord?

DES. With who?

EMIL. Why, with my lord, madam.

DES. Who is thy lord?⁴

EMIL. He that is yours, sweet lady.

DES. I have none: Do not talk to me, Emilia; I cannot weep; nor answer have I none, But what should go by water.⁵ Pr'ythee, to-night Lay on my bed my wedding sheets,—remember;—And call thy husband hither.

EMIL. Here is a change, indeed!
[Exit.]

DES. 'Tis meet I should be us'd so, very meet. How have I been behav'd, that he might stick The small'st opinion on my great'st abuse?⁶

Re-enter EMILIA, with IAGO.

IAGO. What is your pleasure, madam? How is it with you?

⁴ *Who is thy lord?*] This, and the following speech, are omitted in the first quarto. STEEVENS.

⁵ ——— *answer have I none,*
But what should go by water.] Camden has preserved an *Epitaph on Queen Elizabeth*, which concludes with a similar conceit:

“ I think the barge-men might with easier thighs
“ Have rowed her thither in her people's eyes:
“ For how-so-ere, thus much my thoughts have scann'd,
“ Sh'ad come by water, had she come by land.”

STEEVENS.
These lines are to be found in Decker's *Wonderful Yeare*, 1603, and probably were written by him. They are not as an epitaph.

REED.

⁶ ——— *on my great'st abuse?*] This is the reading of the quarto, 1622, which Dr. Johnson thought preferable to the reading of the folio—*on my least misuse*. MALONE.

DES. I cannot tell. Those, that do teach young babes,
Do it with gentle means, and easy tasks:
He might have chid me so; for, in good faith,
I am a child to chiding.

IAGO. What's the matter, lady?

EMIL. Alas, Iago, my lord hath so bewhor'd her,
Thrown such despite and heavy terms upon her,
As true hearts cannot bear.

DES. Am I that name, Iago?

IAGO. What name, fair lady?

DES. Such as, she says, my lord did say I was.

EMIL. He call'd her, whore; a beggar, in his drink,
Could not have laid such terms upon his callet.¹

¹ — upon his callet.] *Callet* is a lewd woman; so called (saith Dr. Grey) from the French *calote*, which was a sort of head-dress worn by country girls. This head-dress is mentioned by Ben Jonson in his *Magnetick Lady*:

“The wearing the *callet*, the politic hood.”

The word is likewise found in *Cocke Lorelles Bote*, a satire, bl. l. printed by Wynkyn de Worde; no date:

“Yf he call her *calat*, she calleth hym knave agayne.”

On the books of the Stationers' Company is the following entry:
“Recevyd of Alexandre Lucye for his lycence for printinge of a booke intituled the—orders of *Calletts* or drabbys.” 1563.

STEEVENS.

—such terms upon his callet.] This word is of great antiquity in the English language. Chaucer has it in his *Remedy of Love*:

“C, for calet, for of, we have O,

“L, for leude, D, for demeanure,” &c. PERCY.

I meet with this word in *The Translation of Ariosto*, 1591:

“And thus this old ill-favour'd spiteful *callet*—.”

Harrington, in a note on that line, says that “*callet* is a nickname used to a woman,” and that “in Irish it signifies a *witch*.”

I have no faith in Dr. Grey's etymology of this word, *Calote* is a coif or light cap, worn by others beside country girls. MALONE.

Dr. Grey's etymology is taken from the Glossary to Urry's Chaucer. REED.

To lash the rascal ^a naked through the world,
Even from the east to the west!

IAGO.

Speak within door.¹

EMIL. O, fye upon him! some such squire he was,
That turn'd your wit the seamy side without,⁴
And made you to suspect me with the Moor.

IAGO. You are a fool; go to.

DES.

O good Iago,

What shall I do to win my lord again?
Good friend, go to him; for, by this light of heaven,
I know not how I lost him. Here I kneel: ⁵—
If e'er my will did trespass 'gainst his love,
Either in discourse of thought, or actual deed;⁶

Tearsheet also says to Pistol:—"I scorn you, scurvy companion."

STEEVENS.

Companion, in the time of Shakspeare, was used as a word of contempt, in the same sense as *fellow* is at this day.

So, in *The Widow's Tears*, by Chapman, 1612: "How now, base companion?"

Again, in *The Spanish Tragedy*, 1605:

"And better 'tis, that base companions die,

"Than by their life to hazard our good haps." MALONE.

² — *the rascal* —] Thus the quarto, 1622; folio—*rascals*. Emilia first wishes that *all* base fellows were detested, and then that heaven would put a whip in every honest hand to punish in a signal manner that villainous knave, particularly in her thoughts, who had abused the too credulous Moor. MALONE.

³ *Speak within door.*] Do not clamour so as to be heard beyond the house. JOHNSON.

⁴ — *the seamy side without*,] That is, *inside out*. JOHNSON.

This idea has already occurred. In a former scene, Iago speaks of Roderigo as of one,

"Whom love hath turn'd almost the wrong side outward."

STEEVENS.

⁵ *Here I kneel: &c.*] The first quarto omits these words and the rest of the speech. STEEVENS.

⁶ *Either in discourse of thought, or actual deed;*] Thus the old copies. So, in *Hamlet*:

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Or that mine eyes, mine ears, or any sense,
 Delighted them in any other form;
 Or that I do not yet, and ever did,
 And ever will,—though he do shake me off
 To beggarly divorcement,—love him dearly,
 Comfort forswear me! Unkindness may do much,
 And his unkindness may defeat my life,
 But never taint my love. I cannot say, whore;
 It does abhor me, now I speak the word;
 To do the act that might the addition earn,
 Not the world's mass of vanity could make me.

IAGO. I pray you, be content; 'tis but his humour;

The business of the state does him offence,
 And he does chide with you.⁷

DES. If 'twere no other,—

IAGO. It is but so, I warrant you. [*Trumpets.*
 Hark, how these instruments summon to supper!

“ O heaven! a beast, that wants *discourse of reason*,

“ Would have mourn'd longer.”

The modern editors, following Mr. Pope, read—*discourse*, or *thought*. MALONE.

Notwithstanding the instance given in favour of the old reading, I suspect, on the authority of the following note, that Mr. Pope's correction is defensible. STEEVENS.

The three ways of committing sin mentioned in the Catholick catechisms are—in *thought*, *word*, and *deed*. C.

The same words remain in our Liturgy. STEEVENS.

⁷ — *and he does chide with you.*] This line is from the quarto, 1622. STEEVENS.

To *chide with* was the phraseology of the time. We have, I think, the same phrase in one of our poet's *Sonnets*. MALONE.

The same phrase indeed occurs in p. 463, but perhaps with a somewhat different construction:

“ And *chides with* thinking.” STEEVENS.

And the great messengers of Venice stay :⁸
Go in, and weep not; all things shall be well.

[*Exeunt DESDEMONA and EMILIA.*]

Enter RODERIGO.

How now, Roderigo?

ROD. I do not find, that thou deal'st justly with me.

IAGO. What in the contrary?

ROD. Every day thou doff'st me with some device, Iago; and rather (as it seems to me now,) keep'st from me all conveniency, than suppliest me with the least advantage of hope. I will, indeed, no longer endure it: Nor am I yet persuaded, to put up in peace what already I have foolishly suffer'd.

IAGO. Will you hear me, Roderigo?

ROD. 'Faith, I have heard too much; for your words, and performances, are no kin together.

IAGO. You charge me most unjustly.

ROD. With nought but truth. I have wasted myself out of my means. The jewels you have had from me, to deliver to Desdemona, would half have corrupted a votarist: You have told me—she has received them, and return'd me expectations and comforts of sudden respect and acquittance;⁹ but I find none.

⁸ *And the great messengers of Venice stay :*] Thus the quarto. The folio reads:

“The messengers of Venice stay *the meat.*” STEEVENS.

⁹ — *and acquittance ;*] This is the reading of the original quarto, 1622. The folio reads—*and acquaintance.*

Acquittance is requital. So, in *King Henry V*:

IAGO. Well; go to; very well.

ROD. Very well! go to! I cannot go to, man; nor 'tis not very well: By this hand, I say, it is very scurvy; and begin to find myself fobb'd in it.

IAGO. Very well.

ROD. I tell you, 'tis not very well. I will make myself known to Desdemona: If she will return me my jewels, I will give over my suit, and repent my unlawful sollicitation; if not, assure yourself, I will seek satisfaction of you.

IAGO. You have said now.

ROD. Ay, and I have said nothing, but what I protest intendment of doing.

IAGO. Why, now I see there's mettle in thee; and even, from this instant, do build on thee a better opinion than ever before. Give me thy hand, Roderigo: Thou hast taken against me a most just exception; but yet, I protest, I have dealt most directly in thy affair.

ROD. It hath not appear'd.

IAGO. I grant, indeed, it hath not appear'd; and your suspicion is not without wit and judgement.* But, Roderigo, if thou hast that within thee indeed, which I have greater reason to believe now than ever,—I mean, purpose, courage, and valour,—this

* And shall forget the office of our hand

“ Sooner than *'quittance* of desert and merit.”

See also *Hamlet*, p. 329, n. 9. MALONE.

See also Vol. IX. p. 16, n. 2. STEEVENS.

* — *your suspicion is not without wit and judgement.*] Shakespeare knew well, that most men like to be flattered on account of those endowments in which they are most deficient. Hence Iago's compliment to this *snipe* on his sagacity and shrewdness.

MALONE.

night show it: if thou the next night following enjoyest not Desdemona, take me from this world with treachery, and devise engines for my life.²

ROD. Well, what is it? is it within reason, and compass?

IAGO. Sir, there is especial commission³ come from Venice, to depute Cassio in Othello's place.

ROD. Is that true? why, then Othello and Desdemona return again to Venice.

IAGO. O, no; he goes into Mauritania, and takes away with him the fair Desdemona, unless his abode be linger'd here by some accident; wherein none can be so determinate, as the removing of Cassio.

ROD. How do you mean—removing of him?

IAGO. Why, by making him incapable of Othello's place; knocking out his brains.

ROD. And that you would have me do?

IAGO. Ay; if you dare do yourself a profit, and a right. He sups to-night with a harlot,⁴ and thither will I go to him;—he knows not yet of his honourable fortune: if you will watch his going thence, (which I will fashion to fall out between twelve and one,) you may take him at your pleasure; I will be near to second your attempt, and

² — take me from this world with treachery, and devise engines for my life.] To devise engines, seems to mean, to contrive racks, tortures, &c. RITSON.

So, in *King Lear*:

“ — like an engine, wrench'd my frame of nature.”

STEEVENS.

³ — there is especial commission —] Shakspeare probably wrote — a special —. MALONE.

⁴ He sups to-night with a harlot,] The folio reads—a *karlotry*, which may be right. Our author has the expression—“ a peevish self-will'd *karlotry*,” in two plays. RITSON.

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he shall fall between us. Come, stand not amazed at it, but go along with me; I will show you such a necessity in his death, that you shall think yourself bound to put it on him. It is now high supper-time,⁵ and the night grows to waste:⁶ about it.

ROD. I will hear further reason for this.

IAGO. And you shall be satisfied. [Exeunt.]

⁵ ——— *It is now high supper-time,*] I believe we should read:
It is now nigh supper-time,— M. MASON.

The old reading is the true one. There is no phrase more common than—"high time to go to bed—to get up," &c. *High time* is full, complete time.

Thus Spenser, in his *Faery Queen*:

"High time now 'gan it wax for Una fair

"To think of those her captive parents——."

Again:

"High time it is this war now ended were."

Clarendon is frequent in his use of this expression.

STEEVENS.

⁶ ——— *and the night grows to waste:*] I suppose Iago means to say, that it is near midnight. Perhaps we ought to print—*waist*. Both the old copies, the quarto, 1622, and the folio, 1623, read—*waist*, which was the old spelling of *waist*.

So Hamlet:

"In the dead *waist* [*waist*] and middle of the night."

See note on that passage, p. 42, n. 3.

So also, in *The Puritan*, a comedy, 1607:

"——— ere the day

"Be spent to the *girdle*, thou shalt be free."

The words, however, may only mean—the night is wasting apace.

MALONE.

The last is certainly the true explanation. So, in *Julius Cæsar*:

"Sir, March is *wasted* fourteen days." STEEVENS.

S C E N E III.

*Another Room in the Castle.**Enter OTHELLO, LODOVICO, DESDEMONA, EMILIA, and Attendants.*

LOD. I do beseech you, sir, trouble yourself no further.

OTH. O, pardon me; 'twill do me good to walk.

LOD. Madam, good night; I humbly thank your ladyship.

DES. Your honour is most welcome.

OTH. Will you walk, sir?—

O,—Desdemona,—

DES. My lord?

OTH. Get you to bed on the instant; I will be return'd forthwith: dismiss your attendant there; look, it be done.

DES. I will, my lord.

[Exeunt OTHELLO, LODOVICO, and Attendants.]

EMIL. How goes it now? he looks gentler than he did.

DES. He says, he will return incontinent: He hath commanded me to go to bed, And bade me to dismiss you.

EMIL. Dismiss me!

DES. It was his bidding; therefore, good Emilia, Give me my nightly wearing, and adieu: We must not now displease him.

EMIL. I would, you had never seen him!

DES. So would not I; my love doth so approve him,

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That even his stubbornness, his checks, and frowns,—
Pr'ythee, unpin me,—have grace and favour in
them.

EMIL. I have laid those sheets you bade me on
the bed.

DES. All's one :—Good father!⁶ how foolish are
our minds!—

If I do die before thee, pr'ythee, shroud me
In one of those same sheets.

EMIL. Come, come, you talk.

DES. My mother had a maid, call'd—Barbara;
She was in love; and he, she lov'd, prov'd mad,
And did forsake her:⁷ she had a song of—willow,
An old thing 'twas, but it express'd her fortune,
And she died singing it: That song, to-night,
Will not go from my mind; I have much to do,
But to go hang my head⁸ all at one side,
And sing it like poor Barbara. Pr'ythee, despatch,

⁶ — *Good father!*] Thus the folio. The quarto, 1622, reads—
all's one, good faith. MALONE.

⁷ — *and he, she lov'd, prov'd mad,*
And did forsake her:] I believe that *mad* only signifies *wild,*
frantick, uncertain. JOHNSON.

Mad, in the present instance, ought to mean—*inconstant.* RITSON.

We still call a wild giddy girl a *mad-cap*: and, in the First Part of
King Henry VI. are mentioned,

“ *Mad*, natural graces that extinguish art.”

Again, in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*:

“ Come on, you *mad-cap*.”

Again, in *Love's Labour's Lost*: “ Do you hear, my *mad* wenches?”
STEEVENS.

⁸ — *I have much to do,*

But to go hang my head—] *I have much ado to do any thing*
but hang my head. We might read:

Not to go hang my head.

This is perhaps the only insertion made in the latter editions
which has improved the play. The rest seem to have been added
for the sake of amplification, or of ornament. When the imagina-

EMIL. Shall I go fetch your night-gown?

DES. No, unpin me here.—
This Lodovico is a proper man.

EMIL. A very handsome man.

DES. And he speaks well.

EMIL. I know a lady in Venice, who would have
walk'd barefoot to Palestine, for a touch of his ne-
ther lip.

DES. *The poor soul⁸ sat sighing⁹ by a sycamore tree,
Sing all a green willow;² [Singing.
Her hand on her bosom, her head on her knee,
Sing willow, willow, willow:*

tion had subsided, and the mind was no longer agitated by the horror of the action, it became at leisure to look round for specious additions. This addition is natural. Desdemona can at first hardly forbear to sing the song; she endeavours to change her train of thoughts, but her imagination at last prevails, and she sings it.

JOHNSON.

From *I have much to do*, to *Nay, that's not next*, was inserted after the first edition, as was likewise the remaining part of the song. STEEVENS.

⁸ *The poor soul &c.*] This song, in two parts, is printed in a late collection of old ballads; the lines preserved here differ somewhat from the copy discovered by the ingenious collector.

JOHNSON.

⁹ — *sat sighing*—] The folio reads—*singing*. The passage, as has been already observed, is not in the original copy printed in 1622. The reading of the text is taken from a quarto of no authority printed in 1630. *Sighing*, as Mr. Steevens has observed, is also the reading in the black-letter copy of this ballad in the Pepys Collection, which Dr. Percy followed, See *The Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*. I. 192. MALONE.

² *Sing all a green willow; &c.*] In the *Gallery of gorging Inventions* &c. 4to. 1578, there is also a song to which the burden is—

“Willow, willow, willow, sing all of green willow;

“Sing all of greene willow shall be my garland.”

Sig. L. ii. STEEVENS.

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*The fresh streams³ ran by her, and murmur'd her
moans ;*

Sing willow, &c.

Her salt tears fell from her, and soften'd the stones ;

Lay by these :

Sing willow, willow, willow ;

Pr'ythee, hie thee ; he'll come anon.—

Sing all a green willow must be my garland.

2.

Let nobody blame him, his scorn I approve,⁴—

Nay, that's not next.—Hark ! who is it that knocks ?

EMIL. It is the wind.

DES. *I call'd my love, false love ;⁵ but what said
be then ?*

Sing willow, &c.

If I court mo women, you'll couch with mo men.⁶

³ *The fresh streams &c.*] These lines are formed with some additions from two couplets of the original song :

“ *The cold streams ran by him, his eyes wept apace ;*

“ *O willow, &c.*

“ *The salt tears fell from him, which drowned his face ;*

“ *O willow, &c.*

“ *The mute birds fate by him, made tame by his moans ;*

“ *O willow, &c.*

“ *The salt tears fell from him, which soften'd the stones.”*

MALONE.

⁴ *Let nobody blame him, his scorn I approve,*] In the original :

“ *Let nobody blame me, her scorn I do prove,*

“ *O willow, &c.*

“ *She was born to be fair ; I to die for her love.”*

MALONE.

⁵ *I call'd my love, false love ;*] This couplet is not in the ballad,

So, get thee gone; good night. Mine eyes do itch;
Doth that bode weeping?

EMIL. 'Tis neither here nor there.

DES. I have heard it said so.⁷—O, these men, these
men!—

Dost thou in conscience think,—tell me, Emilia,—
That there be women do abuse their husbands
In such gross kind?

EMIL. There be some such, no question.

DES. Would'st thou do such a deed for all the
world?

EMIL. Why, would not you?

DES. No, by this heavenly light!

EMIL. Nor I neither by this heavenly light;
I might do't as well i'the dark.

DES. Would'st thou do such a deed for all the
world?

EMIL. The world is a huge thing: 'Tis a great
price
For a small vice.

DES. Good troth, I think thou would'st not.

EMIL. By my troth, I think I should; and un-
do't, when I had done. Marry, I would not do

which is the complaint, not of a woman forsaken, but of a man
rejected. These lines were properly added when it was accom-
modated to a woman. JOHNSON.

⁶ ———you'll couch with *no men*.] This verb is found also in
The Two Noble Kinsmen, 1634:

“ ———O, if thou *couch*

“ But one night with her, ———.” MALONE.

It is used likewise in *The Merchant of Venice*:

“ ——— *couching* with the lawyer's clerk.” STEEVENS.

⁷ *I have heard it said so.*] This as well as the following speech,
is omitted in the first quarto. STEEVENS.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 617

such a thing for a joint-ring;⁸ nor for measures of lawn; nor for gowns, petticoats, nor caps, nor any petty exhibition: but, for the whole world,—Why, who would not make her husband a cuckold, to make him a monarch? I should venture purgatory for't.

DES. Beshrew me, if I would do such a wrong for the whole world.

EMIL. Why, the wrong is but a wrong i'the world; and, having the world for your labour, 'tis a wrong in your own world, and you might quickly make it right.

DES. I do not think, there is any such woman.

EMIL. Yes, a dozen; and as many
To the vantage,⁹ as would store the world they
play'd for.

But, I do think,² it is their husbands' faults,
If wives do fall: Say, that they slack their duties,
And pour our treasures into foreign laps;³

⁸ ——— *for a joint-ring;*] Anciently a common token among lovers. The nature of these rings will be best explained by a passage in Dryden's *Don Sebastian*:

“ ——— a curious artist wrought them,
“ With *joints* so close as not to be perceiv'd;
“ Yet are they both each other's counterpart:
“ Her part had Juan inscrib'd, and his had Zayda,
“ (You know those names are theirs) and, in the midst,
“ A heart divided in two halves was plac'd.
“ Now if the rivets of those rings inclos'd,
“ Fit not each other, I have forg'd this lye:
“ But if they *join*, you must for ever part.” STEEVENS.

⁹ *To the vantage,*] i. e. to boot, over and above. STEEVENS.

² *But, I do think, &c.*] The remaining part of this speech is omitted in the first quarto. STEEVENS.

³ *-And pour our treasures into foreign laps;*] So, in one of our author's poems:

“ Robb'd other beds' revenues of their rents.”

MALONE.

Or else break out in peevish jealousies,
 Throwing restraint upon us; or, say, they strike us,
 Or scant our former having⁴ in despite;
 Why, we have galls; and, though we have some
 grace,

Yet have we some revenge. Let husbands know,
 Their wives have sense like them:⁵ they see, and
 smell,

And have their palates both for sweet and sour,
 As husbands have. What is it that they do,
 When they change us for others? Is it sport?
 I think it is; And doth affection breed it?
 I think, it doth; Is't frailty, that thus errs?
 It is so too: And have not we affections?
 Desires for sport? and frailty, as men have?
 Then, let them use us well: else, let them know,
 The ills we do, their ills instruct us to.⁶

DES. Good night, good night: Heaven me such
 usage send,⁷

Not to pick bad from bad; but, by bad, mend!

[*Exeunt.*

⁴ — *our former having* —] Our former allowance of expence.
 JOHNSON.

⁵ — *have sense like them*:] *Sense* is used here, as in *Hamlet*, for *sensation*, or *sensual appetite*. See p. 228, n. 9. MALONE.

⁶ — *instruct us to*.] Mr. Malone, in the following note, has described and rejected a correction which I have received on the authority of the following passage in *Pericles*. Till this instant I had supposed this passage itself to need amendment:

“Your honour and your goodness *teach me to it*.”

Perhaps no rhyme was intended. STEEVENS.

This passage, [in *Othello*,] as has been already observed, is not in the quarto, 1622. The reading of my text [*so*] is that of the folio, 1623. The modern editors, following an alteration made by the editor of the second folio, read—*instruct us to*. Our poet, for the sake of rhyme, often uses an uncommon phraseology; I have therefore adhered to the authentick copy. MALONE.

⁷ — *Heaven me such usage send*,] Such *uses* is the reading of the

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 619

ACT V. SCENE I.

A Street.

Enter IAGO and RODERIGO.

IAGO. Here, stand behind this bulk ; straight will he come :

Wear thy good rapier bare, and put it home ;
Quick, quick ; fear nothing ; I'll be at thy elbow :
It makes us, or it mars us ; think on that,
And fix most firm thy resolution.

ROD. Be near at hand ; I may miscarry in't.

IAGO. Here, at thy hand ; be bold, and take thy sword. *[Retires to a little distance.]*

ROD. I have no great devotion to the deed ;
And yet he has given me satisfying reasons :—
'Tis but a man gone :—forth, my sword ; he dies.
[Goes to his stand.]

IAGO. I have rubb'd this young quat almost to the sense,
And he grows angry.* Now, whether he kill Cassio,

folio, and of the subsequent editions ; but the old quarto has,—such *usage* fend. *Usage* is an old word for *custom*, and, I think, better than *uses*. JOHNSON.

* *I have rubb'd this young quat almost to the sense,*

And he grows angry. This is a passage much controverted among the editors. Sir T. Hanmer reads *quab*, a *gudgeon* ; not that a *gudgeon* can be *rubb'd* to much *sense*, but that a man grossly deceived is often called a *gudgeon*. Mr. Upton reads—*quail*, which he proves, by much learning, to be a very cholerick bird. Dr. Warburton retains *gnat*, which is found in the early quarto. Theobald would introduce *knot*, a small bird of that name. I have followed the text of the folio, and third and fourth quartos.

A *quat* in the midland counties is a *pimple*, which by rubbing

Or Cassio him, or each do kill the other,
 Every way makes my gain :⁹ Live Roderigo,
 He calls me to a restitution large
 Of gold, and jewels, that I bobb'd from him,¹
 As gifts to Desdemona ;
 It must not be : if Cassio do remain,
 He hath a daily beauty in his life,
 That makes me ugly ; and, besides, the Moor
 May unfold me to him ; there stand I in much peril :
 No, he must die :—But so, I hear him coming.

Enter CASSIO.

ROD. I know his gait, 'tis he ;—Villain, thou diest.
 [*Rushes from his post, and makes a pass at CASSIO.*]

is made to smart, or is *rubbed to sense*. Roderigo is called a *quat* by the same mode of speech, as a low fellow is now termed in low language a *scab*. To rub to the sense, is to rub to the quick. JOHNSON.

The same explanation appeared in a magazine in the year 1748.

REED.

So, in *The Devil's Law-Case*, 1623: "O young *quat*! incontinence is plagued in all creatures in the world."

Again, in Decker's *Gul's Hornbook*, 1609: "—— whether he be a *young quat* of the first yeeres revennew, or some austere and sullen-fac'd steward," &c.

Such another thought occurs in Ben Jonson's *Catiline* :

"—— must have their disgraces still new *rubbed*,"

"To make them *smart*," &c.

Again, in the Preface to Robert Dallington's *Method of Travel, shewed by taking the View of France, as it stood in the yeare of our Lord, 1598*: "—— and be assured that where it *rubbeth* the French itche till it *smart*," &c. STEEVENS.

⁹ —— *my gain* :] The quartos read—*my game*. STEEVENS.

¹ —— *that I bobb'd from him*,] That I *fool'd* him out of. A *bob* formerly signified a mock, or jeer. Coles renders it in his Dictionary, 1679, by *sanna*, as he does *bobb'd* by *illujus*. MALONE.

To *bob* for fish is likewise a technical term among those who delight in angling. Thus, in a well-known line describing a giant's occupation :

"He sat upon a rock, and *bobb'd* for whales." STEEVENS.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 621

CAS. That thrust had been mine enemy indeed,
But that my coat is better than thou think'st;
I will make proof of thine.

[*Draws, and wounds RODERIGO.*

ROD. O, I am slain!

[*IAGO rushes from his post, cuts CASSIO behind
in the leg,³ and exit.*

CAS. I am maim'd for ever :—Help, ho ! murder !
murder ! [Falls.

Enter OTHELLO, at a distance.

OTH. The voice of Cassio :—Iago keeps his word.

ROD. O, villain that I am !

OTH. Hark ! 'tis even so,

CAS. O, help ! ho ! light ! a surgeon !

OTH. 'Tis he ;—O brave Iago, honest, and just,
That hast such noble sense of thy friend's wrong !
Thou teachest me,—Minion, your dear lies dead,
And your fate hies apace :⁴—Strumpet, I come :
Forth of my heart⁵ those charms, thine eyes, are
blotted ;

³ — *in the leg.*] Iago maims Cassio in the *leg*, in consequence of what he had just heard him say, from which he supposed that his body was defended by some secret armour. MALONE.

⁴ *And your fate hies apace :*] Thus the first quarto. The second quarto and the folio read—And your *unblest fate hies*.

STEEVENS.
⁵ *Forth of my heart &c.*] Thus the first quarto. The folio reads—*Far of*. STEEVENS.

Mr. Whalley observes to me that the reading of the quarto is the true one. *Forth* signifies both *out* and *from*. So, in *Hamlet* :

“ *Forth* at your eyes your spirits wildly peep.”

Again, in Jonson's *Volpone* :

“ *Forth* the resolved corners of his eyes.”

Mr. Henley had also made the same observation, and in proof of it produced the following passages from *King Richard III* :

Thy bed, lust-stain'd, shall with lust's blood be
spotted. [Exit OTHELLO.]

Enter LODOVICO and GRATIANO, at a distance.

CAS. What, ho! no watch? no passage?⁶ murder! murder!

GRA. 'Tis some mischance; the cry is very dreadful.

CAS. O, help!

LOD. Hark!

ROD. O wretched villain!

LOD. Two or three groans;—it is a heavy night:⁷
These may be counterfeits; let's think't unsafe
To come in to the cry, without more help.

ROD. No body come? then shall I bleed to death.

“ I clothe my naked villainy

“ With old odd ends, stol'n forth of holy writ.”

Again:

“ 'Faith, none but Humphrey Houre, that call'd your grace,

“ To breakfast once, forth of my company.” REED.

For off [once proposed by Mr. Steevens] is the conjectural reading introduced by the editor of the second folio, and is one of a thousand proofs of capricious alterations made in that copy, without any regard to the most ancient editions. The original reading is undoubtedly the true one. So, in *Mount Tabor, or the Private Exercises of a penitent Sinner*, 1639: “ — whilst all this was acting, there came forth of another door at the farthest end of the stage, two old men,” &c. MALONE.

⁶ — *no passage?*] No passengers? nobody going by?

JOHNSON.

So, in *The Comedy of Errors*:

“ Now in the stirring *passage* of the day.” STEEVENS.

⁷ — *a heavy night*:] A thick cloudy night, in which an ambush may be commodiously laid. JOHNSON.

So, in *Measure for Measure*:

“ Upon the *heavy* middle of the night.” STEEVENS.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 623

Enter IAGO, with a light.

LOD. Hark!

GRA. Here's one comes in his shirt, with light and weapons.

IAGO. Who's there? whose noise is this, that cries on murder?⁸

LOD. We do not know.

IAGO. Did you not hear a cry?

CAS. Here, here; for heaven's sake, help me.

IAGO. What's the matter?

GRA. This is Othello's ancient, as I take it.

LOD. The same, indeed; a very valiant fellow.

IAGO. What are you here, that cry so grievously?

CAS. Iago? O, I am spoil'd, undone by villains! Give me some help.

IAGO. O me, lieutenant! what villains have done this?

CAS. I think, that one of them is hereabout,

⁸ — [*whose noise is this, that cries on murder?*] Thus the quarto, 1622, and the folio, 1623; and such was the phraseology of Shakespeare's age. So, in *Eastward Ho*, a comedy, 1605:

"Who cries on murder? lady, was it you?"

That line is a parody on one in *The Spanish Tragedy*.—The editor of the second folio, who altered whatever he did not understand, for *cries on* substituted *cries out*, and has been followed by all the modern editors. MALONE.

To "cry on" any thing, is not, I believe, a phrase more ancient than to "cry out" on any thing. In *King Henry IV.* P. II. these prepositions act together in one line:

"And that same word even now *cries out on us*."

Perhaps they would both also have been employed in the passage under consideration, but that the structure of our author's verse required only one of them.—I mention these circumstances, that the enormous guilt of the second folio, and its copiers, may be in some degree extenuated. STEVENS.

And cannot make away.

IAGO. O treacherous villains!—
What are you there? come in, and give some help.
[*To LODOVICO and GRATIANO.*]

ROD. O, help me here!

CAS. That's one of them.

IAGO. O murderous slave! O villain!
[*IAGO stabs RODERIGO.*]

ROD. O damn'd Iago! O inhuman dog!—
O! O! O!

IAGO. Kill men i'the dark!—Where be these
bloody thieves?—
How silent is this town!—Ho! murder! murder!
What may you be? are you of good, or evil?*

LOD. As you shall prove us, praise us.

IAGO. Signior Lodovico?

LOD. He, sir.

IAGO. I cry you mercy; Here's Cassio hurt
By villains.

GRA. Cassio?

IAGO. How is it, brother?

CAS. My leg is cut in two.

IAGO. Marry, heaven forbid!—
Light, gentlemen; I'll bind it with my shirt.

Enter BIANCA.

BIAN. What is the matter, ho? who is't that
cry'd?

IAGO. Who is't that cry'd?

* —are you of good, or evil?] So, in *Hamlet*:

“ Art thou a spirit of health? or goblin damn'd?”

STEEVENS.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 625

BIAN. O my dear Cassio! my sweet Cassio!
O Cassio! Cassio! Cassio!

IAGO. O notable strumpet!—Cassio, may you suspect
Who they should be, that have thus mangled you?

CAS. No.

GRA. I am sorry, to find you thus: I have been
to seek you.

IAGO. Lend me a garter:² So.—O, for a chair,
To bear him easily hence!

BIAN. Alas, he faints:—O Cassio! Cassio! Cassio!

IAGO. Gentlemen all, I do suspect this trash
To be a party in this injury.³—
Patience a while, good Cassio.—Come, come;
Lend me a light.—Know we this face, or no?
Alas! my friend, and my dear countryman,⁴
Roderigo? no:—Yes, sure;—O heaven! Roderigo.

GRA. What, of Venice?

IAGO. Even he, sir; did you know him?

GRA. Know him? ay.

IAGO. Signior Gratiano? I cry you gentle pardon;

These bloody accidents must excuse my manners,
That so neglected you.

GRA. I am glad to see you.

IAGO. How do you, Cassio?—O, a chair, a chair!

² *Lend me a garter: &c.*] This speech is omitted in the first quarto. STEEVENS.

³ *To be a party in this injury.*] Thus the folio. The quarto, 1622, reads—to bear a part in this. MALONE.

⁴ *Alas! my friend, and my dear countryman,*] This passage incontrovertibly proves that Iago was meant for a *Venetian*. STEEVENS.

GRA. Roderigo!

IAGO. He, he, 'tis he:—O, that's well said;—
the chair:— [*A chair brought in.*
Some good man bear him carefully from hence;
I'll fetch the general's surgeon.—For you, mistress,
[*To BIANCA.*

Save you your labour.—He that lies slain here,
Cassio,

Was my dear friend: What malice was between you?

CAS. None in the world; nor do I know the man.

IAGO. [*To BIAN.*] What, look you pale?—O,
bear him out o'the air.—

[*CASSIO and ROD. are borne off.*

Stay you, good gentlemen:⁵—Look you pale,
mistress?

Do you perceive the gaftness⁶ of her eye?—

Nay, if you stare,⁷ we shall hear more anon:—

⁵ ——— *good gentlemen:*] Thus the folio. The quarto reads—
gentlewoman. STEEVENS.

That the original is the true reading, may be collected from the situation and feelings of the parties on the scene. No reason can be assigned why *Lodovico* and *Gratiano* should immediately quit the spot where they now are, before they had heard from *Iago* further particulars of the attack on *Cassio*, merely because *Cassio* was borne off: whereas, on the other hand, his mistress, *Bianca*, who has been officiously offering him assistance, would naturally endeavour to accompany him to his lodgings. MALONE.

There seems to me to be a very good reason assignable why these two gentlemen should immediately quit the spot on *Cassio's* being borne off, viz. to assist him or see him properly taken care of, rather than to stay and gratify their curiosity. Respect for the person appointed *Othello's* successor, if not personal regard, would, I should think, naturally have dictated such a proceeding, had they not been stopped by *Iago's* desiring them not to go. REED.

⁶ ——— *the gaftness*—] So, the folio. The quartos read—
jestures. STEEVENS.

⁷ *Nay, if you stare,*] So, the folio. The quartos read—*stirr.*
STEEVENS.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 627

Behold her well; I pray you, look upon her;
Do you see, gentlemen? nay, guiltiness will speak,
Though tongues were out of use.⁸

Enter EMILIA.

EMIL. 'Las, what's the matter; what's the matter, husband?

IAGO. Cassio hath here been set on in the dark,
By Roderigo, and fellows that are scap'd;
He's almost slain, and Roderigo dead.

EMIL. Alas, good gentleman! alas, good Cassio!

IAGO. This is the fruit of whoring.—Pr'ythee,
Emilia,
Go know of Cassio where he supp'd to-night:⁹—

⁸ — *guiltiness will speak,*

Though tongues were out of use.] So, in *Hamlet*:

“For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak

“With most miraculous organ.” STEEVENS.

⁹ — *Pr'ythee, Emilia,*

Go know of Cassio where he supp'd to-night:] In the last scene of the preceding act Iago informs Roderigo, that Cassio was to sup with Bianca; that he would accompany Cassio to her house, and would take care to bring him away from thence between twelve and one. Cassio too had himself informed Iago, in Act IV. sc. i. that he would sup with Bianca, and Iago had promised to meet him at her house. Perhaps, however, here Iago chose to appear ignorant of this fact, conscious that he had way-laid Cassio, and therefore desirous of being thought ignorant of his motions during the evening. MALONE.

Yet, how happens it, that Bianca, instead of replying—*He supp'd &c.* did not answer, addressing herself to Iago:

Why, you know,

He supp'd &c.?

The former line being imperfect, some such words might have been omitted. Or perhaps, our author was unwilling that Bianca should say in the presence of Iago's wife, that he too had been of Cassio's supper-party; and hence this seeming inconsistency. STEEVENS.

What, do you shake at that?

BIAN. He supp'd at my house; but I therefore shake not.

IAGO. O, did he so? I charge you, go with me.

EMIL. Fye, fye upon thee, strumpet!

BIAN. I am no strumpet; but of life as honest, As you that thus abuse me.

EMIL. As I? foh! fye upon thee!

IAGO. Kind gentlemen, let's go see poor Cassio dress'd:—

Come, mistress, you must tell us another tale.—

Emilia, run you to the citadel,

And tell my lord and lady what has happ'd.—

Will you go on, I pray?—This is the night, [*Aside.*

That either makes me, or fordoes me quite.²

[*Exeunt.*

S C E N E II.

A Bedchamber: DESDEMONA in bed asleep. A light burning.

Enter OTHELLO.

OTH. It is the cause, it is the cause, my foul,—
Let me not name it³ to you, you chaste stars!—

² ——— or fordoes me quite.] To *fordo*, is to undo, to ruin, to destroy. So, in *Hamlet*:

“ ——— did, with desperate hand,

“ *Fordo* its own life.”

Again, in the Interlude of *Jacob and Esau*, 1568:

“ If God were so pleased, I would that were *fordonne*.”

STEEVENSON.

See p. 95, n. 2. MALONE.

³ *It is the cause, it is the cause, my foul,—*

Let me not name it—] The abruptness of this soliloquy makes

It is the cause.—Yet I'll not shed her blood ;
Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow,
And smooth as monumental alabaster.

[Takes off his sword.

Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men.⁴
Put out the light, and then put out the light :⁵

it obscure. The meaning, I think, is this:—I am here (says Othello in his mind) overwhelmed with horror. What is the reason of this perturbation? Is it want of resolution to do justice? Is it the dread of shedding blood? No; it is not the action that shocks me, but *it is the cause, it is the cause, my soul; let me not name it to you, ye chaste stars! it is the cause.* JOHNSON.

Othello, full of horror at the cruel action which he is about to perpetrate, seems at this instant to be seeking his justification, from representing to himself *the cause*, i. e. the greatness of the provocation he had received. STEEVENS.

⁴ *Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men.*] This is the second attempt of Othello to justify what he has undertaken. First he says, *It is the cause*, i. e. his own *cause*; now he is willing to suppose himself the preventer of mischief to others. STEEVENS.

⁵ *Put out the light, and then put out the light:]* It should be thus printed :

Put out the light, and then—Put out the light!

The meaning is, I will put out the light, and *then* proceed to the execution of my purpose. But the expression of *putting out the light*, bringing to mind the effects of the extinction of the light of life, he breaks short, and questions himself about the effects of this metaphorical extinction, introduced by a repetition of his first words, as much as to say,—But hold, let me first weigh the reflections which this expression so naturally excites. WARBURTON.

This has been considered as a very difficult line. *Fielding* makes *Betterton* and *Booth* dispute about it with the *author himself* in the other world. The punctuation recommended by Dr. Warburton, gives a spirit to it which I fear was not intended. It seems to have been only a *play upon words*. *To put the light out* was a phrase for *to kill*. In *The Maid's Tragedy*, *Melantius* says,

“ —'Tis a justice, and a noble one,

“ *To put the light out of such base offenders.*” FARMER.

This phrase is twice used in *Sidney's Arcadia*, for killing a lady, p. 460 and 470, edit. 1633.

Again, in an unpublished play called *The Second Maiden's Tragedy*, by George Chapman, licensed by Sir George Buc, October

If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,
I can again thy former light restore,

31st, 1611: (now in the library of the Earl of Shelburne, who honoured me with the use of it:)

"——— O soul of cunning!

" Came that arch subtilty from thy lady's counsel,

" Or thine own sudden craft? confests to me

" How oft thou hast been a bawd to their close actions,

" Or all thy light goes out." STEEVENS.

Put out the light, and then put out the light:] This is one of the passages to which I alluded in a note on *As you like it*, Vol. VI. p. 175, in which, by a modern regulation, our poet's words have obtained a meaning, which in my opinion was not in his thoughts. Mr. Upton was the first person who introduced the conceit in this line, which has been adopted since his book appeared, by pointing it thus:

Put out the light, and then—Put out the light! &c.

I entirely agree with Dr. Farmer, that this regulation gives a spirit to this passage that was not intended. The poet, I think, meant merely to say,—“I will now put out the lighted taper which I hold, and then put out the light of life;” and this introduces his subsequent reflection and comparison, just as aptly, as supposing the latter words of the line to be used in the same sense as in the beginning of it, which cannot be done without destroying that equivoque and play of words of which Shakspeare was so fond.

There are few images which occur more frequently in his works than this. Thus, in *King Henry VI.* Part III. the dying Clifford says,

“ Here burns my candle out, ay, here it dies.”

Again, in *Macbeth*:

“ Out, out, brief candle!”

Again, in *King Henry VIII.*:

“ This candle burns not clear; 'tis I must snuff it;

“ Then out it goes.”

Again, in his *Rape of Lucrece*:

“ Fair torch, burn out thy light, and lend it not

“ To darken her, whose light excelleth thine!”

Let the words—*put out her light*, stand for a moment in the place of—*darken her*, and then the sentence will run—*Burn out thy light, fair torch, and lend it not to put out her light, whose light is more excellent than thine.* In the very same strain, says Othello, “*let me first extinguish the light I now hold, and then put out the light of life.*” But how different in effect and importance are these two acts! The extinguished taper can be lighted again, but the light of life, when once extinguished, can never, alas, be relumed!

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 631

Should I repent me:—but once put out thine,⁶
 Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature,⁷
 I know not where is that Promethean heat,
 That can thy light relume.⁸ When I have pluck'd
 thy rose,⁹

I cannot give it vital growth again,
 It needs must wither:—I'll smell it on the tree.—

[*Kissing her.*

O balmy breath, that dost almost persuade
 Justice to break her sword!—One more, one more.—
 Be thus when thou art dead, and I will kill thee,
 And love thee after:—One more, and this the
 last:

The question is not, which regulation renders the passage most elegant and spirited, but what was the poet's idea.—I believe, however, that Shakspeare wrote—and then put out *thy* light; and the reading of the original copy in a subsequent line, “ — but once put out *thine*,” seems to me to countenance this emendation.

In *The Merchant of Venice* the word *light* is used with equal ambiguity:

“ Let me give *light*, but let me not be *light*.” MALONE.

⁶ — put out thine,] Thus the quarto. The folio reads—put out *thy light*. I have chosen the former reading for the sake of measure, and to escape a useless repetition of the word—*light*.

STEEVENS.

⁷ *Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature*,] So, in *Palmerin D'Oliua*, 1588, p. 1: “ — those that beheld her, esteemed her for the chiefest piece of workmanship that ever nature framed.”

REED.

⁸ *That can thy light relume*.] Thus the folio. The first quarto—*return*: the second quarto—*relumine*. STEEVENS.

Our poet has *illum* for *illuminate*, in *Hamlet*:

“ Had made his course, to *illum* that part of heaven,

“ Where now it burns.” MALONE.

⁹ — thy *rose*,] Thus the folio. The quarto reads,—*the* rose. Again, the quarto reads,

“ — I'll smell *it* on the tree.”

The folio,

“ I'll smell *thee* on the tree.” STEEVENS.

So sweet was ne'er so fatal. I must weep,
But they are cruel tears: This sorrow's heavenly;²
It strikes, where it doth love.—She wakes—

DES. Who's there? Othello?

OTH. Ay, Desdemona.

DES. Will you come to bed, my lord?

OTH. Have you pray'd to-night, Desdemona?

DES. Ay, my lord.

OTH. If you bethink yourself of any crime,
Unreconcil'd as yet to heaven and grace,
Solicit for it straight.

DES. Alas, my lord, what may you mean by that?

OTH. Well, do it, and be brief; I will walk by:
I would not kill thy unprepared spirit;
No,—Heaven forefend!—I would not kill thy soul.³

DES. Talk you of killing?

OTH. Ay, I do.

DES. Then, heaven

² — *This sorrow's heavenly*;] This tenderness, with which I lament the punishment which justice compels me to inflict, is a holy passion.

I wish these two lines could be honestly ejected. It is the fate of Shakspeare to counteract his own pathos. JOHNSON.

Perhaps the poet would not have retained both these images, had he published the play himself, though in the hurry of composition he threw them both upon paper. The first seems adopted from the fabulous history of the crocodile, the second from a passage in the scripture. STEEVENS.

“Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth.” M. MASON.

³ — *I would not kill thy soul*.] Sir W. D'Avenant has borrowed this thought in his *Albovine King of Lombardy*, 1629:

“I am not fraught with devil's spleen; I would

“Not hurt *thy soul*.”

Othello appears to have been a favourite of his author; for he has bestowed on him that piety which he had refused to *Hamlet*. See p. 216, n. 7. STEEVENS.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 633

Have mercy on me !

OTH. Amen, with all my heart !

DES. If you say so, I hope you will not kill me.

OTH. Humph !

DES. And yet I fear you ; for you are fatal then,
When your eyes roll so : Why I should fear, I know
not,

Since guiltiness I know not ; but yet, I feel, I fear.⁴

OTH. Think on thy sins.

DES. They are loves I bear to you.

OTH. Ay, and for that thou diest.

DES. That death's unnatural, that kills for
loving.⁵—

Alas, why gnaw you so your nether lip ?
Some bloody passion shakes your very frame :
These are portents ; but yet, I hope, I hope,
They do not point on me.

⁴ *Since guiltiness I know not ; but yet, I feel, I fear.*] Read,
Since guilt I know not ; but yet, I feel, I fear.

Guiltiness has been already misprinted for *guilt*. [See p. 627,
line 2.] It is impossible that Shakspeare should lengthen a word
merely to spoil his metre. RITSON.

The chivalry of criticism does not, in my opinion, require us
to defend the old copies (those grannams of the stage, *balba de nare*
locustæ) when they so grossly offend against the laws of metre. In
the earlier part of this work I have got rid of some of their de-
formities, but in this and a few of the latter plays I have been
content with exposing them, being certain that their notoriety will
hereafter prove the means of securing a privilege which, respecting
the present editors, may be litigated. STEEVENS.

⁵ *That death's unnatural, that kills for loving.*] This thought is
likewise found in *The Legend of Orpheus and Eurydice*, a poem, by
H. L. 16mo. 1597^o

“ Unnatural, which kill where you should kisse.”

Again, in our poet's *King Richard III* :

“ It is a quarrel most unnatural,

“ To be reveng'd on him that loveth thee.” MALONE.

O^{TH.} Peace, and be still!

D^{ES.} I will so: What's the matter?

O^{TH.} That handkerchief, which I so lov'd, and
gave thee,
Thou gav'st to Cassio.

D^{ES.} No, by my life and soul;
Send for the man, and ask him.

O^{TH.} Sweet soul, take heed,
Take heed of perjury; thou'rt on thy death-bed.

D^{ES.} Ay, but not yet to die.

O^{TH.} Yes, presently:
Therefore confess thee freely of thy sin;
For to deny each article with oath,
Cannot remove, nor choke, the strong conception,
That I do groan withal. Thou art to die.

D^{ES.} Then, Lord have mercy on me!

O^{TH.} I say, amen.

D^{ES.} And have you mercy too!—I never did
Offend you in my life; never lov'd Cassio,
But with such general warranty of heaven
As I might love: I never gave him token.

O^{TH.} By heaven, I saw my handkerchief in his
hand.

O perjur'd woman! thou dost stone my heart,
And mak'st me call, what I intend to do,—
A murder, which I thought a sacrifice:⁶

⁶ *A murder, which I thought a sacrifice:]* This line is difficult. *Thou hast hardened my heart, and makest me kill thee with the rage of a murderer, when I thought to have sacrificed thee to justice with the calmness of a priest striking a victim.*

It must not be omitted, that one of the elder quartos reads,—*thou dost stone thy heart*; which I suspect to be genuine. The meaning then will be,—*thou forcest me to dismiss thee from the world in the state of the murdered without preparation for death,*

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 635

I saw the handkerchief.

DES. He found it then;
I never gave it him:—Send for him hither,
And let him confess a truth.

OTH. He hath confess'd.

DES. What, my lord?

OTH. That he hath—us'd thee.⁷

DES. How? unlawfully?

OTH. Ay.

DES. He'll not say so.

OTH. No, his mouth is stopp'd;
Honest Iago hath ta'en order for't.⁸

DES. My fear interprets then,—What, is he
dead?

OTH. Had all his hairs been lives,⁹ my great re-
venge
Had stomach for them all.

when I intended that thy punishment should have been a sacrifice atoning for thy crime.

I am glad that I have ended my revival of this dreadful scene. It is not to be endured. JOHNSON.

Thy heart, is the reading of the original quarto, 1622.

MALONE.

⁷ *That he hath—us'd thee.*] The quarto, 1622, exhibits this line thus:

That he hath—uds death. MALONE.

⁸ *—hath ta'en order for't.*] i. e. has *taken measures*. So, in Holinshed's *Reign of King John*: "*—he took such order for him, that he was despoiled of all his goods and benefices,*" p. 174.

STEEVENS.

Again, in *Dido Queen of Carthage*, by Marlowe and Nathe, 1594:

"I will *take order* for that presently." MALONE.

⁹ *Had all his hairs been lives,*] This thought appears to have been very common, as it occurs frequently in dramatick per-

DES. Alas! he is betray'd, and I undone.

OTH. Out, strumpet! Weep'st thou for him to my face?

DES. O, banish me my lord, but kill me not.

OTH. Down, strumpet!

DES. Kill me to-morrow, let me live to-night.

OTH. Nay, if you strive,—

DES. But half an hour.

OTH. Being done;³

There is no pause.

DES. But while I say one prayer.

OTH. It is too late.⁴ [*He smothereth her.*]

formances prior to Shakspeare's *Othello*. So, in *The Devil's Charter*, by Barnaby Barnes, 1607:

“ Know Cæsar, had I now as many lives

“ As there are stones, or *bairs* upon my head,

“ I would,” &c.

Again, in Beaumont and Fletcher's *King and no King*:

“ ————— but if all

“ *My bairs were lives*, I would not be engaged

“ In such a cause.”

Again, in *Hieronymo*:

“ Had I as many lives as there be stars—.” STEEVENS.

King and no King, as appears by Sir Henry Herbert's papers, was produced in 1611. See *The Historical Account of the English Stage*, Vol. II. MALONE.

³ *Being done*,

There is no pause.] The first quarto omits this speech.

STEEVENS.

⁴ *It is too late.*] After this speech of Othello, the elder quarto adds an invocation from Desdemona, consisting only of the sacred name thrice repeated. As this must be supposed to have been uttered while she is yet struggling with death, I think an editor may be excused from inserting such a circumstance of supererogatory horror, especially as it is found in but one of the ancient copies.

STEEVENS.

This alteration was probably made in consequence of the statute of the 3d of James I. c. 21. which lays a penalty for the profane

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 637

EMIL. [*Within.*] My lord, my lord! what ho!
my lord! my lord!

OTH. What noise is this?—Not dead! not yet
quite dead?

I, that am cruel, am yet merciful;
I would not have thee linger in thy pain.—
So, so.

EMIL. [*Within.*] What, ho! my lord, my lord!

OTH. Who's there?

EMIL. [*Within.*] O, good my lord, I would speak
a word with you.

OTH. Yes;—'tis Emilia:—by and by.—She's
dead.

'Tis like she comes to speak of Cassio's death;
The noise was high.—Ha! no more moving?
Still as the grave. Shall she come in? Were't good?
I think, she stirs again:—No.—What's the best?
If she come in, she'll sure speak to my wife:—
My wife! my wife! what wife?—I have no wife:⁵
O, insupportable! O heavy hour!⁶

use of the name of God, &c. in stage-plays, interludes, May-
games, &c. TOLLET.

The statute was necessary; for not only the ancient moralities,
but the plays (those of *Chapman* in particular) abound with the
most wanton and shocking repetitions of a name which never ought
to be mentioned in such an irreverend manner on the stage.

STEEVENS.

The alteration was undoubtedly made by the Master of the
Revels. MALONE.

⁵ *My wife! my wife! what wife?—I have no wife:*] “*Filium
unicum adolescentulum habeo: ah! quid dixi habere me? imo
habui, Chreme.*” *Ter. Heautont.* STEEVENS.

⁶ *O heavy hour!*] In the first scene of this act we have “—*a
heavy night.*” This epithet likewise occurs in a sense somewhat
unusual in *Letters from the Paston Family*, Vol. II. p. 193:
“—it is demyd y^t my Lady wolde herafter be the rather myn
heavy Lady for y^t delyng—.” STEEVENS.

Methinks, it should be now a huge eclipse
Of sun and moon; and that the affrighted globe
Should yawn at alteration.

EMIL. [*Within.*] I do beseech you [!] may speak
with you,

O, good my lord!

OTH. I had forgot thee: O, come in, Emilia:—
Soft,—by and by:—Let me the curtains draw.—
Where art thou? What's the matter with thee
now? [*Unlocks the door.*]

Enter EMILIA.

EMIL. O, good my lord, yonder's foul murder
done.

OTH. What? now?

EMIL. But now, my lord?

OTH. It is the very error of the moon;
She comes more near the earth than she was wont;
And makes men mad.

EMIL. Cassio, my lord, has kill'd a young Ve-
netian,
Call'd—Roderigo.

OTH. Roderigo kill'd!
And Cassio kill'd?

EMIL. No, Cassio is not kill'd.

OTH. Not Cassio kill'd? Then murder's out of
tune,
And sweet revenge grows harsh.

DES. O, falsely, falsely murder'd!¹

¹ O, *falsely, falsely murder'd!*] It cannot be supposed that a person who had been effectually *strangled* or *smothered*, could speak again; for if the power of breathing returned after the instrument of suf-

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 639

EMIL. Alas! what cry's that?

OTH. That! what?

EMIL. Oth, and alas! that was my lady's voice:—
Help! help, ho! help!—O lady, speak again!

ocation was removed, no act of violence had in reality taken place by which the conclusion of life could be brought on. But such is the peculiar fate of Desdemona, that she is supposed to be smothered, revives to acquaint us that *she smothered herself*, and then dies without any ostensible cause of death. I am of opinion that some theatrical direction has been omitted; and that when Othello says:

“ ——— Not dead? not yet quite dead?

“ I, that am cruel, am yet merciful;

“ I would not have thee linger in thy pain:—

“ *So, so.*”

He then stabs her, repeating the two last words, as he repeats the blow. Thus, Virgil:

“ ——— *sic, sic* juvat ire sub umbras.”

After the repetition of wounds, Desdemona might speak again, with propriety, and yet very soon expire; as says Cassio of Roderigo:

“ ——— even but now he spake,

“ After long seeming dead.”

The first resolution of Othello was to poison her, but from this measure he is dissuaded by the policy of Iago. He is next determined to use the poniard; but, his tenderness awaking, he cannot bear to deform those beauties which he had so often approached with other sensations, and for different purposes. Therefore, says he,

“ ——— I'll not shed her blood,

“ Nor scar that whiter skin of her's than snow,

“ And smooth as monumental alabaster:”

And this resolution we are to imagine he would have kept, but that he was averse to employing those means again, which had already appeared to be uncertain in their effect.

If this apparent want of a play-house direction had occasioned any absurdity in the original representation of the play, probably it is glanced at by Ben Jonson in *The Alchemist*, Act V: “ Didst hear a cry, said'st thou? Yes, sir, like unto a man that had been strangled an hour, and could not speak.” STEEVENS.

The Alchemist was first represented in the year 1610, and this passage is found in the original copy printed in that year.

MALONE.

Sweet Desdemona ! O, sweet mistress, speak !

DES. A guiltless death I die.

EMIL. O, who hath done
This deed ?

DES. Nobody ; I myself ; farewell :
Commend me to my kind lord ; O, farewell. [*Dies.*]

OTH. Why, how should she be murder'd ?

EMIL. Alas, who knows ?

OTH. You heard her say herself, it was not I.

EMIL. She said so ; I must needs report the truth.

OTH. She's, like a liar, gone to burning hell ;
'Twas I that kill'd her.

EMIL. O, the more angel she,
And you the blacker devil !

OTH. She turn'd to folly, and she was a whore.⁷

EMIL. Thou dost belie her, and thou art a devil.

OTH. She was false as water.⁹

EMIL. Thou art rash as fire, to say
That she was false ; O, she was heavenly true !

⁷ *She's, like a liar, gone to burning hell ;*] Here is nothing faulty in this passage, but it may be read,

She's, like a liar, gone to burn in hell.

The vulgar denunciation of future vengeance is,—I think, *you'll burn in hell* for this. WHALLEY.

So, in *King Richard II* :

“ That hand shall *burn in* never-quenching fire,—”

STEEVENS.

⁸ *She turn'd to folly, and she was a whore.*] *Folly*, signifies here, as in the sacred writings, *depravity of mind*. So, in our author's *Rape of Lucrece* :

“ Her sad behaviour feeds his vulture *folly*.” MALONE.

So, in *Deuteronomy*, xxii. 21 : “ — she hath wrought *folly* in Israel, to play the *whore* ” &c. STEEVENS.

⁹ — *false as water.*] As water that will support no weight, nor keep any impression. JOHNSON.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 641

OTH. Cassio did tup her; ask thy husband else.
O, I were damn'd beneath all depth in hell,
But that I did proceed upon just grounds
To this extremity;² Thy husband knew it all.

EMIL. My husband?

OTH. Thy husband.

EMIL. That she was false to wedlock?

OTH.

Ay, with Cassio.

Nay, had she been true,
If heaven would make me such another world
Of one entire and perfect chrysolite,
I'd not have sold her for it.

EMIL. My husband?

OTH.

Ay, 'twas he that told me first;³

An honest man he is, and hates the slime
That sticks on filthy deeds.

EMIL.

My husband?

OTH. What needs this iterance,⁴ woman? I say,
thy husband.

EMIL.⁵ O mistress, villainy hath made mocks
with love!⁶—

² — *this* extremity ;] Perhaps our author wrote—to this *extreme*. The measure demands a shorter word than the former. Thus, in *Romeo and Juliet* :

“ ’Twixt my *extremes* and me this bloody knife

“ Shall play the umpire.” STEEVENS.

³ — *that told me first* ;] The folio reads,—that told me *on her* first. STEEVENS.

⁴ — *iterance*,] Thus the folio. The quarto reads—*iteration*.

STEEVENS.

⁵ *Emil.*] The first quarto omits this and the following speech.

STEEVENS.

⁶ — *villainy hath made mocks with love!*] *Villainy* has taken advantage to *play upon* the weakness of a violent passion.

JOHNSON.

I have sometimes thought that these words might mean, that

My husband say, that she was false ?

OTH.

He, woman;

I say, thy husband ; Dost understand the word ?
My friend, thy husband, honest, honest Iago.

EMIL. If he say so, may his pernicious soul
Rot half a grain a day ! he lies to the heart ;
She was too fond of her most filthy bargain.

OTH. Ha !

EMIL. Do thy worst :
This deed of thine is no more worthy heaven,
Than thou wast worthy her.

OTH.

Peace, you were best.

EMIL. Thou hast not half the power to do me
harm,

As I have to be hurt.' O gull ! O dolt !
As ignorant as dirt ! thou hast done a deed,—
I care not for thy sword ; I'll make thee known,
Though I lost twenty lives :—Help ! help, ho ! help !
The Moor has kill'd my mistress ; Murder ! mur-
der !

“ villainy hath play'd on its object under a pretence of kindness.”
So, in *Macbeth* :

“ —the surfeited grooms

“ Do mock their charge *with snores*.”

But in this I have very little confidence. MALONE.

‘*Thou hast not half the power to do me harm,*

As I have to be hurt.] She means to say,—*I have in this case
power to endure more than thou hast power to inflict.*

JOHNSON.

This sentiment is more expanded in *King Henry VIII* :

“ —I am able now, methinks,

“ (Out of a fortitude of soul I feel,)

“ To endure more miseries and greater far,

“ Than my weak-hearted enemies dare offer.”

Again, in *King Henry VI*. Part II :

“ More can I bear than you dare execute.”

Of this last line there is no trace in the old play on which Shakspeare
formed the Second Part of *King Henry VI*. MALONE.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 643

Enter MONTANO, GRATIANO, and IAGO.

MON. What is the matter?—How now, general?

EMIL. O, are you come, Iago? you have done well,

That men must lay their murders on your neck.

GRA. What is the matter?

EMIL. Disprove this villain, if thou be'st a man: He says, thou told'st him that his wife was false; I know, thou didst not, thou'rt not such a villain; Speak, for my heart is full.

IAGO. I told him what I thought; and told no more Than what he found himself was apt and true.

EMIL. But did you ever tell him, she was false?

IAGO. I did.

EMIL. You told a lie; an odious, damned lie; Upon my soul, a lie; a wicked lie:— She false with Cassio!—Did you say, with Cassio?

IAGO. With Cassio, mistress; Go to, charm your tongue.*

* — *charm your tongue.*] By this expression, *Charm your tongue*, the poet meant no more than to make Iago say,—“Apply some power, strong as a *charm* would be, to your tongue; for nothing less can stop its volubility. So, in *King Henry VI.* Part III:

“Peace, wilful boy, or I will *charm your tongue.*”

Again, Ben Jonson, in *Cynthia's Revels*:

“—*charm your skipping tongue.*”

Again, in Spenser's *Faery Queen*, B. V. c. ix:

“That well could *charm his tongue*, and time his speech.”

Again, in *The Yorkshire Tragedy*, 1608:

“The surest way to *charm* a woman's tongue,

“Is—break her neck:—a politician did it.”

EMIL. I will not charm my tongue; I am bound to speak;
My mistress⁹ here lies murder'd in her bed.

ALL. O heavens forefend!

EMIL. And your reports have set the murder on.

OTH. Nay, stare not, masters; it is true, indeed.

GRA. 'Tis a strange truth.

MON. O monstrous act!

EMIL. Villainy, villainy, villainy!—
I think upon't,—I think,—I smell't;—O villainy!
I thought so then;—I'll kill myself for grief.—
O villainy, villainy!

IAGO. What, are you mad? I charge you, get you home.

EMIL. Good gentlemen, let me have leave to speak;

'Tis proper I obey him, but not now:—
Perchance, Iago, I will ne'er go home.

OTH. O! O! O! O! [*Hanging over his wife.*]

EMIL. Nay, lay thee down, and roar;
For thou hast kill'd the sweetest innocent,
That e'er did lift up eye.

OTH. O, she was foul!—

[*Rising.*]
I scarce did know you, uncle: There lies your
niece,
Whose breath, indeed, these hands have newly
stopp'd:

Pliny informs us, that *favete linguis* was the constant exclamation before any religious *charm* was applied. From this circumstance the phrase, to *charm* a tongue, might have originated.

STEEVENS.

⁹ *My mistress* &c.] This line, and the following six speeches, are wanting in the first quarto. STEEVENS.

I know, this act shows horrible and grim.

GRA. Poor Desdemona! I am glad thy father's dead;

Thy match was mortal to him, and pure grief
Shore his old thread in twain: did he live now,
This fight would make him do a desperate turn,
Yea, curse his better angel from his side,
And fall to reprobation.³

OTH. 'Tis pitiful: but yet Iago knows,
That she with Cassio hath the act of shame
A thousand times committed;⁴ Cassio confess'd it:

³ *Yea, curse his better angel from his side,
And fall to reprobation.*] So, in our author's 144th Sonnet:

" ——— my female evil

" *Tempteth my better angel from my side.*" MALONE.

—— *reprobation.*] Both the first and second folio read—
reprobance. STEEVENS.

⁴ *A thousand times committed;*] This is another passage which seems to suppose a longer space comprised in the action of this play than the scenes include. JOHNSON.

That she with Cassio hath the act of shame

A thousand times committed;——

And again:

'Tis not a year or two shows us a man.

I am not convinced from these passages only, that a longer space is comprised in the action of this play than the scenes include.

What Othello mentions in the first instance, might have passed still more often, before they were married, when Cassio went between them; for she, who could find means to elude the vigilance of her father in respect of Othello, might have done so in respect of Cassio, when there was time enough for the occurrence supposed to have happened. A jealous person will aggravate all he thinks, or speaks of; and might use a *thousand* for a much less number, only to give weight to his censure: nor would it have answered any purpose to have made Othello a little nearer or further off from truth in his calculation. We might apply the poet's own words in *Cymbeline*:

" ——— spare your arithmetick;

" Once, and a million."

And she did gratify his amorous works
 With that recognizance and pledge of love
 Which I first gave her; I saw it in his hand;
 It was a handkerchief,^s an antique token
 My father gave my mother.

The latter is a proverbial expression, and might have been introduced with propriety, had they been married only a day or two. Emilia's reply perhaps was dictated by her own private experience; and seems to mean only, "that it is too soon to judge of a husband's disposition; or that Desdemona must not be surprised at the discovery of Othello's jealousy, for it is not even a year or two that will display all the failings of a man."

Mr. Tollet, however, on this occasion has produced several instances in support of Dr. Johnson's opinion; and as I am unable to explain them in favour of my own supposition, I shall lay them before the publick.

Act III. sc. iii. Othello says:

"What sense had I of her stolen hours of lust?

"I saw it not, thought it not, it harm'd not me:

"*I slept the next night well*, was free and merry:

"I found not Cassio's kisses on her lips.

"On Othello's wedding night he and Cassio embark'd from Venice, where Desdemona was left under the care of Iago. They all meet at Cyprus; and since their arrival there, the scenes include only one night, the night of the celebration of their nuptials. Iago had not then infused any jealousy into Othello's mind, nor did he suspect any former intimacy between Cassio and Desdemona, but only thought it 'apt and of great credit that she loved him.' What night then was there to intervene between *Cassio's* kisses and *Othello's* sleeping the next night well? Iago has said, 'I lay with *Cassio* lately,' which he could not have done, unless they had been longer at Cyprus than is represented in the play; nor could Cassio have kept away, for the space of a whole week, from Bianca."

STEEVENS.

In confirmation of Johnson's observation, that this and several other passages tend to prove that a larger space of time is comprized in the action of this play than the scenes include, we may cite that in which Emilia says, "That her husband had a hundred times woo'd her to steal Desdemona's handkerchief." M. MASON.

^s *It was a handkerchief*, &c.] Othello tells his wife, Act III. sc. iv:

"—— that handkerchief

"Did an Egyptian to my mother give."

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 647

EMIL. O heaven! O heavenly powers!

IAGO. Come, hold your peace.

EMIL. 'Twill out, 'twill out:—I hold my peace,
sir? no;

No, I will speak as liberal as the air;⁶

And here he says:

It was a handkerchief,—

My father gave my mother.

This last passage has been censured as an oversight in the poet; but perhaps it exhibits only a fresh proof of his art. The first account of the handkerchief, as given by Othello, was purposely ostentatious, in order to alarm his wife the more. When he mentions it a second time, the truth was sufficient for his purpose.

This circumstance of the handkerchief is perhaps ridiculed by Ben Jonson, in his *Poetaster*: “—you shall see me do *the Moor*; master, lend me your *scarf*.” STEEVENS.

I question whether *Othello* was written early enough to be ridiculed by *The Poetaster*. There were many other *Moors* on the stage.

It is certain at least, that the passage,

“Our new heraldry is *bands*, not *beards*.”

could not be inserted before the middle of the year 1611.

FARMER.

If the allusion in *The Poetaster* (which was printed in 1601) were to *Othello*, it would fix its date much earlier than I conceive it to have been written.—But the allusion in the passage quoted, is not to *Othello*, but to an old play called *The Battle of Alcazar*, 1594.—In *The Poetaster*, Pyrgus, who says, “you shall see me do *the Moor*,” proceeds in the same scene, and repeats an absurd speech of the *Moor's* in *The Battle of Alcazar*, beginning with this line:

“Where art thou, boy? where is Calipolis?”

which ascertains the allusion to be to that play. MALONE.

⁶ *No, I will speak as liberal as the air;*] The folio reads,

I'll be in speaking liberal as the *north*.

Liberal is free, under no control. So, in *Hamlet*:

“Which *liberal* shepherds give a grosser name.”

This quality of the North wind is also mentioned in *The White Devil*, or *Vittoria Corombona*, 1612:

“And let th' *irregular* North wind sweep her up.”

Let heaven, and men, and devils, let them all,
All, all, cry shame against me, yet I'll speak.

IAGO. Be wise, and get you home.

EMIL.

I will not.

[*IAGO offers to stab his wife.*

GRA.

Fye!

Your sword upon a woman?

EMIL. O thou dull Moor! that handkerchief
thou speak'st of,

I found by fortune, and did give my husband;
For often, with a solemn earnestness,
(More than, indeed, belong'd to such a trifle,)
He begg'd of me to steal it.

IAGO.

Villainous whore!

EMIL. She give it Cassio! no, alas; I found it,
And I did give't my husband.

IAGO.

Filth, thou liest.

EMIL. By heaven, I do not; I do not, gentlemen:

O murd'rous coxcomb! what should such a fool
Do with so good a wife?

[*IAGO stabs EMILIA, then runs out.*

OTH.

Are there no stones in heaven,
But what serve for the thunder?—Precious villain!

Again, in *Jeronimo*, i. e. the first part of *The Spanish Tragedy*, 1605:

“ Now let your bloods be *liberal* as the sea.” STEEVENS.

No, I will speak as *liberal* as the air;] The quarto, 1622, reads,
I'll be in speaking liberal as the air.

The text is formed out of the two copies. MALONE.

¹ Are there no stones in heaven,

But what serve for the thunder?] Othello does not demand a thunderbolt for Iago. He only asks, if there are no lesser degrees of chastisement more proportioned to the guilt of mortals, ready to drop down on such villains as Iago, though Omnipotence withholds

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 649

GRA. The woman falls; sure, he has kill'd his wife.

EMIL. Ay, ay; O, lay me by my mistress' side!

GRA. He's gone, but his wife's kill'd.

MON. 'Tis a notorious villain. Take you this weapon,

Which I have here recover'd from the Moor:
Come, guard the door without; let him not pass,
But kill him rather; I'll after that same villain,
For 'tis a damned slave.

[*Exeunt* MONTANO and GRATIANO.]

its thunder, as too noble an instrument for the punishment of crimes like his?

The same thought occurs in *The Revenger's Tragedy*, 1609:

"Is there no thunder left? or is't kept up

"In stock, for heavier vengeance?"

Shakspeare, might however mean, does heaven reserve its thunder only to make a noise? has it no implements of mischief to punish as well as terrify?

"—— quum fulmina torques,

"Necquicquam horremus? cæcique in nubibus ignes

"Terrificant animos, et inania murmura miscent?"

STEEVENS.

Steevens's last explanation of this passage appears to be just, his first was unnatural. We cannot suppose that Othello in the paroxysm of resentment, agitation, and despair, should think any crimes more heinous than that of Iago.—It is difficult indeed to conceive a crime that demanded a heavier vengeance.

M. MASON.

The meaning, I think, is,—Has not Heaven one supernumerary bolt, to hurl directly at the head of this atrocious villain? Must all the stores of its arsenal be reserved for common and ordinary thunder, which, though sometimes destructive, is in the usual course of nature not specifically pointed at a particular object?

"—— Magne regnator deum,

"Tam lentus audis scelera? tam lentus vides?

"Ecquando sævâ fulmen emittes manu,

"Si nunc serenum est?—

"Cur dextra, divum rector atque hominum, vacat

"Tua, nec trifidâ mundus ardescit face?

"In hunc tones, hunc figas?" MALONE.

OTH. I am not valiant neither,
But every puny whipster gets my sword :—
But why should honour outlive honesty ?
Let it go all.

EMIL. What did thy song bode, lady ?
Hark, can'st thou hear me ? I will play the swan,
And die in musick ;⁸—*Willow, willow, willow.*—
Moor, she was chaste ; she lov'd thee, cruel Moor :
So come my soul to bliss, as I speak true ;
So speaking as I think, I die,—I die. [Dies.

OTH. I have another weapon in this chamber,
It is a sword of Spain, the ice-brook's temper ;⁹—

⁸ — *I will play the swan,
And die in musick ; &c.*] This, and the two former lines of the
speech, are wanting in the first quarto.

The same thought has already occurred in *The Merchant of Venice* :

“ — he makes a swan-like end,

“ Fading in musick : — ”

Again, in *King John* :

“ — this pale faint swan,

“ Who chants a woful hymn to his own death.”

STEEVENSON.

⁹ — *the ice-brook's temper ;*] In the first edition it is—*Icebrook's temper*. Thence corrupted to—*Ice-brook's*. *Ebro's temper* : the waters of that river of Spain are particularly famous for tempering of steel. The finest arms in the world, the Catalonian fuses.

POPE.

I believe the old reading changed to *ice-brook* is right. Steel is hardened by being put red-hot into very cold water.

JOHNSON.

The particular name of the *ice-brook* may be determined by the following passages in Martial. It was undoubtedly the *brook* or *rivulet* called *Salo* (now Xalon), near *Bilbilis* in Celtiberia. In this the Spaniards plunged all their swords and other weapons while hot from the forge ; and to the *icy* quality of the waters, they were indebted for their stubborn temper :

“ Sævo Bilbilin optimam metallo

“ Et ferro Plateam suo fonantem,

“ Quam fluctu tenui sed inquieto

“ *Armorum Salo temperator ambit.*”

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 651

O, here it is :—Uncle, I must come forth.

GRA. [*Within.*] If thou attempt it, it will cost thee dear ;

Thou hast no weapon, and perforce must suffer.

OTH. Look in upon me then, and speak with me, Or, naked as I am, I will assault thee.

Re-enter GRATIANO.

GRA. What is the matter ?

OTH. Behold ! I have a weapon ;
A better never did itself sustain

Again,

“ Quibus remissum corpus astringes brevi,
“ *Salone* qui ferrum *gelat*.”

Again,

“ Pugio, quem curvis signat brevis orbita venis,
“ Stridentem *gelidis* hunc *Salo* tinxit aquis.”

Again, in *Justin*, l. 44: “ Præcipua his quidem ferri materia sed aqua ipsa ferro violentior; quippe temperamento ejus ferrum acrius redditur; nec ullum apud eos telum præbatur quod non aut in *Bilibi* fluvio aut Chalybe tingatur. Unde etiam Chalybes fluvii hujus finitimi appellati, ferroque cæteris præstare dicuntur.” These parts of Spain have been at all times famous for the temper of their arms. STEEVENS.

I incline to read:

It is a sword of Spain, 'tis ebroes temper.

If we suppose that the words [*'tis ebroes*] were huddled together either in transcribing or composing, thus, [*tisebroes*] the compositor in running it over with his eye, might (to make it sense as he thought) add a couple of letters and divide the words thus [*tb'isebrokes*] which is nearly as it stands in the old quarto.

I doubt whether *ice-brooks* are usual in the climate of Spain.

BLACKSTONE.

— *the ice-brook's temper* ;] The quarto, 1622, has—*Ise brookes*, which is only the old spelling of *Ice-brooke's*, the reading of the folio. Sir William Blackstone doubts whether *ice-brooks* are usual in the climate of Spain. How that fact may be, I know not; and I am confident Shakspeare did not inquire. MALONE.

Upon a soldier's thigh:² I have seen the day,
 That, with this little arm, and this good sword,
 I have made my way through more impediments
 Than twenty times your stop:³—But, O vain boast!
 Who can control his fate? 'tis not so now.—
 Be not afraid, though you do see me weapon'd;⁴
 Here is my journey's end, here is my butt,
 And very sea-mark of my utmost fail.
 Do you go back dismay'd? 'tis a lost fear;
 Man but a rush against Othello's breast,
 And he retires;—Where should Othello go?—
 Now, how dost thou look now? O ill-starr'd wench!

² *A better never did itself sustain*

Upon a soldier's thigh:] So, in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, by Beaumont and Fletcher, 1634:

“ ——— On his thigh a sword

“ Hung by a curious baldricke, when he frowns,

“ To seal his will by; better, on my conscience,

“ *Never was soldier's friend.*” MALONE.

³ *I have made my way through more impediments*

Than twenty times your stop:] So, in *Coriolanus*, sc. i:

“ ——— cracking ten thousand curbs

“ Of more strong link asunder, than can ever

“ Appear in your impediment.” STEEVENS.

⁴ ——— *though you do see me weapon'd;]* This uncommon participle is used by Sidney in his *Arcadia*. MALONE.

⁵ ——— *O ill-starr'd wench!]* This and the six preceding lines, are omitted in the first quarto. *Wench* originally signified only a young woman. *Cassandra*, in Whetstone's *Promos and Cassandra*, 1578, says of herself:

“ Oh wretched *wench*, where may I first complayne?”

Again,

“ Therefore, sweet *wenche*, helpe me to rue my woe.”

The word is used without any dishonourable meaning in the Bible: “ Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz stayed by En-rogel; (for they might not be seen to come into the city:) and a *wench* went and told them; and they went and told king David.” 2 Sam. xvii. 17.

And again, by Gawin Douglas, in his version of the *Æneid*:

“ ——— audetque viris concurrere *virgo*.”

“ This *wensche* stoutlye rencounter durst with men.”

STEEVENS.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 653

Pale as thy smock! when we shall meet at compt,
This look of thine will hurl my soul from heaven,
And fiends will snatch at it. Cold, cold, my girl?
Even like thy chastity.—

O cursed, cursed slave!—Whip me, ye devils,
From the possession of this heavenly sight!
Blow me about in winds! roast me in sulphur!
Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire!—
O Desdemona! Desdemona! dead?
Dead? O! O! O!

Enter LODOVICO, MONTANO, CASSIO, *carried in a*
chair, and Officers, with IAGO, *prisoner.*

LOD. Where is this rash and most unfortunate
man?

OTH. That's he, that was Othello; here I am.

LOD. Where is that viper? bring the villain
forth.

OTH. I look down towards his feet;⁶—but that's
a fable:

If that thou be'st a devil, I cannot kill thee.

[OTHELLO wounds IAGO.

LOD. Wrench his sword from him.

IAGO. I bleed, fir; but not kill'd.

OTH. I am not sorry neither; I'd have thee live;
For, in my sense, 'tis happiness to die.⁷

⁶ — *towards his feet;*] To see if, according to the common
opinion, his feet be cloven. JOHNSON.

⁷ *For, in my sense, 'tis happiness to die.*] The same thought has
already occurred in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

“ ——— ’Tis well thou’rt gone,—

“ If it be well to live.” STEEVENS.

Lod. O thou Othello, that wast once so good,
Fall'n in the practice⁷ of a cursed slave,
What shall be said to thee?

Oth. Why, any thing:
An honourable murderer, if you will;
For nought I did in hate, but all in honour.

Lod. This wretch hath part confests'd his villainy:
Did you and he consent in Cassio's death?

Oth. Ay.

Cas. Dear general, I never gave you cause.⁸

Oth. I do believe it, and I ask your pardon.
Will you, I pray, demand that demi-devil,
Why he hath thus ensnar'd my soul and body?

Iago. Demand me nothing: What you know,
you know:

From this time forth I never will speak word.

Lod. What? not to pray?

Gra. Torments will ope your lips.

Oth. Well, thou dost best.

Lod. Sir, you shall understand what hath be-
fall'n,

Which, as I think, you know not: Here is a letter,
Found in the pocket of the slain Roderigo;

⁷ — *in the practice* —] In the *snare*, by the *stratagem*.

JOHNSON.

See Vol. XIV. p. 121, n. 3. MALONE.

⁸ *Dear general, I never gave you cause.*] Our poet, probably without knowing it, has used the words of *The Spanish Tragedy*, 1605:

"Hieronymo, *I never gave thee cause?*" MALONE.

This phrase, a very familiar one, is also employed in p. 570, l. 3:

"Alas, the day! *I never gave him cause.*" STEEVENS.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 655

And here, another: the one of them imports
The death of Cassio to be undertook
By Roderigo.

Oth. O villain!

Cas. Most heathenish, and most gross!¹

Lod. Now here's another discontented paper,
Found in his pocket too; and this, it seems,
Roderigo meant to have sent this damned villain;
But that, belike, Iago in the interim²
Came in and satisfied him.

Oth. O the pernicious caitiff!—
How came you, Cassio, by that handkerchief
That was my wife's?

Cas. I found it in my chamber:
And he himself confess'd, but even now,³
That there he dropp'd it, for a special purpose,
Which wrought to his desire.

Oth. O fool! fool! fool!

Cas. There is, besides, in Roderigo's letter,—
How he upbraids Iago, that he made him
Brave me upon the watch; whereon it came
That I was cast: And even but now he spake,
After long seeming dead,—Iago hurt him,
Iago set him on.

¹ Oth. *O villain!*

Cas. *Most heathenish, and most gross!*] Read, for the sake of
both sense and metre:

Oth. *O villainy!*

Cas. *Most heathenish, and most gross!* RITSON.

² ——— *in the interim* —] The first copy has,—in the *nick*. It
was, I suppose, thought upon revision, that *nick* was too familiar.

JOHNSON.

³ ——— *confess'd, but even now,*] The quarto, 1622, reads—
confess'd *it even* now. The folio—confess'd *it, but* even now.
The word *it* was manifestly caught by the compositor's eye glancing
on the subsequent line. MALONE.

LOD. You must forsake this room, and go with
us;

Your power and your command is taken off,
And Cassio rules in Cyprus. For this slave,—
If there be any cunning cruelty,
That can torment him much, and hold him long,
It shall be his: You shall close prisoner rest,
Till that the nature of your fault be known
To the Venetian state:—Come, bring away.

OTH. Soft you; a word or two, before you go.
I have done the state some service, and they know
it;

No more of that:—I pray you, in your letters,
When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
Speak of me as I am; ⁴ nothing extenuate,
Nor set down aught in malice: then must you speak
Of one, that lov'd not wisely, but too well;
Of one, not easily jealous, but, being wrought,
Perplex'd in the extreme; of one, whose hand,
Like the base Judean, threw a pearl away,
Richer than all his tribe; ⁵ of one, whose subdu'd
eyes,

⁴ *Speak of me as I am;*] The first quarto reads,—*Speak of them as they are.* The present reading, which is the reading of the folio, has more force. JOHNSON.

⁵ ——— *of one, whose hand,*

Like the base Judean, threw a pearl away,

Richer than all his tribe;] I have restored *Judean*, from the elder quarto, as the genuine and more eligible reading. Mr. Pope thinks this was occasioned probably by the word *tribe* just after: I have many reasons to oppose this opinion. In the first place, the most ignorant Indian, I believe, is so far the reverse of the *dung-hill-cock* in the fable, as to know the estimation of a pearl beyond that of a barley corn. So that, in that respect, the thought itself would not be just. Then, if our author had designed to reflect on the *ignorance* of the Indian without any farther reproach, he would have called him *rustic*, and not *base*. Again, I am persuaded, as my friend Mr. Warburton long ago observed, the phrase is not

Albeit unused to the melting mood,⁶

here *literal*, but *metaphorical*; and, by his *pearl*, our author very properly means a *fine woman*. But Mr. Pope objects farther to the reading *Judian*, because, to make sense of this, we must presuppose some particular story of a Jew alluded to; which is much less obvious: but has Shakspeare never done this, but in this single instance? I am satisfied, in his *Judian*, he is alluding to Herod; who, in a fit of blind jealousy, threw away such a jewel of a wife as Mariamne was to him. What can be more parallel in circumstance, than the conduct of Herod and Othello? Nor was the story so little obvious as Mr. Pope seems to imagine: for, in the year 1613, the lady Elizabeth Carew published a tragedy called *MARIAM, the Fair Queen of JEWRY*. I shall only add, that our author might write *Judian*, or *Judean*, (if that should be alledged as any objection) instead of *Judean*, with the same licence and change of accent, as, in his *Antony and Cleopatra*, he shortens the second syllable of Euphrates in pronunciation: which was a liberty likewise taken by Spenser, of whom our author was a studious imitator. THEOBALD.

Like the base Judean,] Thus the folio. The first quarto, 1622, reads—*Indian*. Mr. Theobald therefore is not accurate in the preceding note, in his account of the old copies. MALONE.

The elder quarto reads *Judian*, and this is certainly right. And by the *Judian* is meant Herod, whose usage to Mariamne is so apposite to the speaker's case, that a more proper instance could not be thought of. Besides, he was the subject of a tragedy at that time, as appears from the words in *Hamlet*, where an ill player is described,

“ ——— to out-herod Herod.”

The metaphorical term of a *pearl* for a fine woman, is so common as scarce to need examples. In *Troilus and Cressida*, a lover says of his mistress,

“ There she lies a PEARL.”—

And again,

“ Why she is a *pearl*, whose price” &c. WARBURTON.

I cannot join with the learned criticks in conceiving this passage to refer either to the ignorance of the natives of India, in respect

⁶ ——— whose subdu'd eyes,

Albeit unused to the melting mood,] So, in our poet's 30th Sonnet:

“ Then can I drown an eye unus'd to flow.” MALONE.

Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees

of *pearls*, or the well-known story of Herod and Mariamne. The poet might just as fairly be supposed to have alluded to that of Jephthah and his daughter.

Othello, in detestation of what he had done, seems to compare himself to another person who had thrown away a *thing of value*, with some circumstances of the *meanest villainy*, which the epithet *base* seems to imply in its general sense, though it is sometimes used only for *low* or *mean*. The Indian could not properly be termed *base* in the former and most common sense, whose fault was *ignorance*, which brings its own excuse with it; and the crime of Herod surely deserves a more aggravated distinction. For though in every crime, great as well as small, there is a degree of *baseness*, yet the *furiis agitated amor*, such as contributed to that of Herod, seems to ask a stronger word to characterize it; as there was *spirit* at least in what he did, though the spirit of a fiend, and the epithet *base* would better suit with *petty larceny* than *royal guilt*. Besides, the simile appears to me too apposite almost to be used on the occasion, and is little more than bringing the fact into comparison with itself. Each through jealousy had destroyed an innocent wife, circumstances so parallel, as hardly to admit of that variety which we generally find in one allusion, which is meant to illustrate another, and at the same time to appear as more than a superfluous ornament. Of a like kind of imperfection, there is an instance in *Virgil*, Book XI. where after Camilla and her attendants have been described as absolute Amazons:

“ At medias inter cædes exultat Amazon,

“ Unum exerta latus pugnae pharetrata Camilla.—

“ At circum lætæ comites,” &c.

we find them, nine lines after, compared to the Amazons themselves, to Hippolyta or Penthesilea, surrounded by their companions:

“ Quales Threiciæ, cum flumina Thermodontis

“ Pulsant, et pictis bellantur Amazones armis :

“ Seu circum Hippolyten, seu cum se martia curru

“ Penthesilea refert.”

What is this but bringing a fact into comparison with itself? Neither do I believe the poet intended to make the present simile coincide with all the circumstances of Othello's situation, but merely with the single act of having *basely* (as he himself terms it) destroyed that on which he ought to have set a greater value. As the *pearl* may bear a *literal* as well as a *metaphorical* sense, I would rather choose to take it in the *literal* one, and receive Mr. Pope's rejected explanation, *pre-supposing some story of a Jew alluded to*, which might be well understood at that time, though now perhaps for-

Their medicinal gum:⁷ Set you down this:

gotten, or at least imperfectly remembered. I have read in some book, as ancient as the time of Shakspeare, the following tale; though, at present, I am unable either to recollect the title of the piece, or the author's name:

"A Jew, who had been prisoner for many years in distant parts, brought with him at his return to Venice a great number of pearls, which he offered on the 'change among the merchants, and (one alone excepted) disposed of them to his satisfaction. On this pearl, which was the largest ever shown at market, he had fixed an immoderate price, nor could be persuaded to make the least abatement. Many of the magnificoes, as well as traders, offered him considerable sums for it, but he was resolute in his first demand. At last, after repeated and unsuccessful applications to individuals, he assembled the merchants of the city, by proclamation, to meet him on the Rialto, where he once more exposed it to sale on the former terms, but to no purpose. After having expatiated, for the last time, on the singular beauty and value of it, he threw it suddenly into the sea before them all."

Though this anecdote may appear inconsistent with the avarice of a Jew, yet it sufficiently agrees with the spirit so remarkable at all times in the scattered remains of that vindictive nation.

Shakspeare's seeming aversion to the Jews in general, and his constant desire to expose their *avarice* and *baseness* as often as he had an opportunity, may serve to strengthen my supposition; and as that nation, in his time, and since, has not been famous for crimes *daring* and *conspicuous*, but has rather contented itself to thrive by the meaner and more successful arts of *baseness*, there seems to be a particular propriety in the epithet. When Falstaff is justifying himself in *King Henry IV.* he adds, "If what I have said be not true, I am a Jew, an Ebrew Jew," i. e. one of the most suspected characters of the time. The liver of a Jew is an ingredient in the cauldron of *Macbeth*; and the vigilance for gain, which is described in Shylock, may afford us reason to suppose the poet was alluding to a story like that already quoted.

⁷ *Their medicinal gum:*] Thus the quarto, 1622. This word is also used by our author in *The Winter's Tale*; and occurs in the works of two of our greatest poets—Milton and Dryden.

STEVENS.

I have preferred the reading of the folio [medicinal] because the word occurs again in *Much Ado about Nothing*: "—any impediment will be *medicinal* to me." i. e. salutary.

MALONE.

And say, besides,—that in Aleppo once,

Richer than all his tribe, seems to point out the Jew again in a mercantile light; and may mean, that *the pearl was richer than all the gems to be found among a set of men generally trading in them*. Neither do I recollect that Othello mentions many things, but what he might fairly have been allowed to have had knowledge of in the course of his peregrinations. Of this kind are the fables of the Euxine sea flowing into the Propontick, and the Arabian trees dropping their gums. The rest of his speeches are more free from mythological and historical allusions, than almost any to be found in Shakspeare, for he is never quite clear from them; though in the design of this character he seems to have meant it for one who had spent a greater part of his life in the field, than in the cultivation of any other knowledge than what would be of use to him in his military capacity. It should be observed, that most of the flourishes merely ornamental were added after the first edition; and this is not the only proof to be met with, that the poet in his alterations sometimes forgot his original plan.

The metaphorical term of a pearl for a fine woman, may, for aught I know, be very common; but in the instances Dr. Warburton has brought to prove it so, there are found circumstances that immediately show a woman to have been meant. So, in *Titulus and Cressida*:

“HER BED IS INDIA, there SHE lies a *pearl*.”

“Why SHE is a *pearl* whose price hath launch’d” &c.

In Othello’s speech we find no such leading expression; and are therefore at liberty, I think, to take the passage in its *literal* meaning.

Either we are partial to discoveries which we make for ourselves, or the spirit of controversy is contagious; for it usually happens that each possessor of an ancient copy of our author, is led to assert the superiority of all such readings as have not been exhibited in the notes, or received into the text of the last edition. On this account, our present republication (and more especially in the celebrated plays) affords a greater number of these diversities than were ever before obtruded on the publick. A time however may arrive, when a complete body of variations being printed, our readers may luxuriate in an ample feast of *thats* and *rubicbes*; and thenceforward it may be prophesied, that all will unite in a wish that the selection had been made by an editor, rather than submitted to their own labour and sagacity.

To this note should be subjoined (as an apology for many others which may not be thought to bring conviction with them) that the true sense of a passage has frequently remained undetermined, till repeated experiments have been tried on it; when one commentator,

Where a malignant and a turban'd Turk^s

making a proper use of the errors of another, has at last explained it to universal satisfaction. When mistakes have such effects, who would regret having been mistaken, or be sorry to prove the means of directing others, by that affinity which a wrong reading or interpretation sometimes has to the right, though he has not been so lucky as to produce at once authorities which could not be questioned, or decisions to which nothing could be added?

STEEVENS.

I abide by the old text, "the base *Judian*." Shakspeare seems to allude to *Herod* in the play of *Mariamne*:

"I had but one inestimable jewel——

"Yet I in suddaine choler cast it downe,

"And dasht it all to pieces." FARMER.

The words quoted by Dr. Warburton from *Hamlet* do not prove what they are adduced for. The *Herod* there alluded to, was a character in one of the ancient *Mysteries*. [See *Candlemas-day, or the killing of the children of Israel*, a *Mystery*, in Hawkins's *Origin of the English Drama*, Vol. I.]

I once thought that the accent here given to *Judean* was a strong objection to this reading: and that the word must have been *Judéan* or *Judean*, (as a derivative from *Judæa*) which would not suit the metre. But the objection was founded on a mistake; for derivative words of this kind were thus accented in Shakspeare's time. Thus, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, we have in the old copies, "an *Epicurian* rascal," which ascertains the pronunciation of that word to have been different formerly from what it is now. The word is thus spelt by North also in his translation of Plutarch. Again, in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

"Keep his brains fuming, Epicúrean cooks."

So, in *Hamlet*, we have the *Némæan* lion (which is written in the old copy *Nemian*).

Those who would adopt the original reading, *Indian*, may urge in its support that the pearl naturally brings a people of the East to Shakspeare's mind; the connexion in his time being considered so strong, that a contemporary author has distinguished the inhabitants of *India* by an epithet founded on the circumstance of their abounding in pearls:

^s *Where a malignant and a turban'd Turk—*] I am told that it is immediate death for a Christian to strike a Turk in Aleppo. Othello is boasting of his own audacity. STEEVENS.

Beat a Venetian, and traduc'd the state,
 I took by the throat the circumcised dog,
 And smote him—thus. [Stabs himself.]

L^{OD.} O bloody period!

G^{RA.} All, that's spoke, is marr'd.

O^{TH.} I kiss'd thee, ere I kill'd thee;—No way
 but this, [Falling upon DESDEMONA.]
 Killing myself, to die upon a kiss.⁹ [Dies.]

C^{AS.} This did I fear, but thought he had no
 weapon;
 For he was great of heart.

L^{OD.} O Spartan dog,²
 More fell than anguish, hunger, or the sea!
 Look on the tragick loading of this bed;
[To IAGO.]

“ ——— where the bright sun with his neighbour beams
 Doth early light the *pearled Indians*.”

Cornelia, a tragedy, by T. Kyd, 1594.

On the other hand, the word *tribe* is strongly in favour of the reading of the text, and I have now no doubt that it is the true one.

Webster in his *Appius and Virginia* appears to have had this passage in his thoughts:

“ ——— Had your lordship yesterday
 “ Proceeded as 'twas fit, to a just sentence,
 “ The apparel and the *jewels* that she wore,
 “ More worth than all her *tribe*, had then been due
 “ Unto our client.” MALONE.

⁹ *Killing myself, to die upon a kiss.*] So, in the Second Part of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*, 1590:

“ Yet let me kiss my lord before I dye,
 “ And let me dye with kissing of my lord.” STEEVENS.

² *O Spartan dog,*] The dogs of Spartan race were reckoned among those of the most fierce and savage kind. HANMER.

They are again mentioned in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*:

“ When in a wood of Crete they bay'd the bear
 “ With bounds of Sparta.” HENLEY.

The Spartan dogs in our poet's contemplation, were *blood-bounds*. See Vol. V. p. 128. MALONE.

This is thy work: the object poisons sight;—
 Let it be hid.—Gratiano, keep the house,
 And seize upon the fortunes of the Moor,
 For they succeed to you.—To you, lord governor,
 Remains the censure of this hellish villain;³

³ ———— *To you, lord governor,*

Remains the censure of this hellish villain;] Rymer, who had neither vigour of imagination to make a poet, nor strength of judgement to make a critick, as appears from his *Edgar*, and his *Remarks on Shakspeare*, had yet just enough to play the buffoon and caviller. His criticism on the *Poets of the last Age*, with only a mixture of trite remarks, transcribed from the French commentators on *Aristotle*, are one continued heap of ignorance and insolence. Almost the only remark on Shakspeare, which, I think, deserves an answer, is upon Iago's character, which he thus censures: *To entertain the audience (says he) with something new and surprising, against common sense and nature, he would pass upon us a close, dissembling, false, ungrateful rascal, instead of an open-hearted, frank, plain-dealing soldier, a character constantly worn by them for some thousands of years in the world.* This hath the appearance of sense, being founded on that rule of *Nature* and *Aristotle*, that each character should have manners convenient to the age, sex, and condition.

Ætatis cujusque notandi sunt tibi mores, &c.

says Horace. But how has our critick applied it? According to this rule it is confessed, that a soldier should be brave, generous, and a man of honour. This is to be his dramatick character. But either *one* or *more* of any order may be brought in. If only *one*, then the character of the order takes its denomination from the manners of that *one*. Had therefore the only soldier in this play been Iago, the rule had been transgressed, and Rymer's censure well founded. For then this *eternal villain* must have given the character of the soldiery; which had been unjust and unnatural. But if a *number* of the same order be represented, then the character of the order is taken from the manners of the majority; and this according to nature and common sense. Now in this play there are many of the order of the soldiery; and all, excepting Iago, represented as open, generous, and brave. From *these* the soldier's character is to be taken; and not from Iago, who is brought as an exception to it: unless it be unnatural to suppose there could be an exception; or that a villain ever insinuated himself into that corps. And thus Shakspeare stands clear of this impertinent criticism.

WARBURTON.

The time, the place, the torture,—O enforce it!
 Myself will straight aboard; and, to the state,
 This heavy act with heavy heart relate. [*Exeunt.*]

—*the* censure—] i. e. the sentence. See Vol. III. p. 179, n. 5. STEEVENS.

See also Vol. VII. p. 48, n. 3. MALONE.

⁴ The beauties of this play impress themselves so strongly upon the attention of the reader, that they can draw no aid from critical illustration. The fiery openness of Othello, magnanimous, ardent, and credulous, boundless in his confidence, ardent in his affection, inflexible in his resolution, and obdurate in his revenge; the cool malignity of Iago, silent in his resentment, subtle in his designs, and studious at once of his interest and his vengeance; the soft simplicity of Desdemona, confident of merit, and conscious of innocence, her artless perseverance in her suit, and her slowness to suspect that she can be suspected, are such proofs of Shakspeare's skill in human nature, as, I suppose, it is vain to seek in any modern writer. The gradual progress which Iago makes in the Moor's conviction, and the circumstances which he employs to enflame him, are so artfully natural, that, though it will perhaps not be said of him as he says of himself, that he is *a man not easily jealous*, yet we cannot but pity him, when at last we find him *perplexed in the extreme*.

There is always danger, left wickedness, conjoined with abilities, should steal upon esteem, though it misses of approbation; but the character of Iago is so conducted, that he is from the first scene to the last hated and despised.

Even the inferior characters of this play would be very conspicuous in any other piece, not only for their justness, but their strength. Cassio is brave, benevolent, and honest, ruined only by his want of stubbornness to resist an insidious invitation. Roderigo's suspicious credulity, and impatient submission to the cheats which he sees practised upon him, and which by persuasion he suffers to be repeated, exhibit a strong picture of a weak mind betrayed by unlawful desires to a false friend; and the virtue of Emilia is such as we often find, worn loosely, but not cast off, easy to commit small crimes, but quickened and alarmed at atrocious villainies.

The scenes from the beginning to the end are busy, varied by happy interchanges, and regularly promoting the progression of the story; and the narrative in the end, though it tells but what is known already, yet is necessary to produce the death of Othello.

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 665

Had the scene opened in Cyprus, and the preceding incidents been occasionally related, there had been little wanting to a drama of the most exact and scrupulous regularity. JOHNSON.

To Dr. Johnson's admirable and nicely discriminative character of *Othello*, it may seem unnecessary to make any addition; yet I cannot forbear to conclude our commentaries on this transcendent poet with the fine eulogy which the judicious and learned Lowth has pronounced on him, with a particular reference to this tragedy, perhaps *the most perfect* of all his works:

"In his *viris* [tragediæ Græcæ scilicet scriptoribus] accessio quædam Philosophiæ erat Poetica facultas: neque sane quisquam adhuc Poesin ad fastigium suum ac culmen evexit, nisi qui prius in intima Philosophia artis suæ fundamenta jecerit.

"Quod si quis objiciat, nonnullos in hoc ipso poeseos genere excelluisse, qui nunquam habiti sunt Philosophi, ac ne literis quidem præter cæteros imbuti; sciat is, me rem ipsam quærere, non de vulgari opinione, aut de verbo laborare; *qui autem tantum ingenio consecutus est, ut naturas hominum, vimque omnem humanitatis, causasque eas, quibus aut incitatur mentis impetus aut retunditur, penitus perspectas habeat, ejusque omnes motus oratione non modo explicet, sed effingat, planeque oculis subjiciat; sed excitet, regat, commoveat, moderetur; eum, etsi disciplinaram instrumento minus adjutum, eximie tamen esse Philosophum arbitrari.* Quo in genere affectum Zelotypiæ, ejusque causas, adjuncta, progressiones, effectus, in una SHAKESPEARI nostri fabula, copiosius, subtilius, accuratius etiam veriusque pertractari existimo, quam ab omnibus omnium Philosophorum scholis in simili argumento est unquam disputatum." [Prælectio prima. edit. 1763, p. 8.] MALONE.

If by "the most perfect" is meant the *most regular* of the foregoing plays, I subscribe to Mr. Malone's opinion; but if his words were designed to convey a more exalted praise, without a moment's hesitation I should transfer it to *MACBETH*.

It is true, that the domestick tragedy of *Othello* affords room for a various and forcible display of character. The less familiar groundwork of *Macbeth* (as Dr. Johnson has observed) excludes the influence of peculiar dispositions. That exclusion, however, is recompensed by a loftier strain of poetry, and by events of higher rank; by supernatural agency, by the solemnities of incantation, by shades of guilt and horror deepening in their progress, and by visions of futurity solicited in aid of hope, but eventually the ministers of despair.

Were it necessary to weigh the pathetick effusions of these dramas against each other, it is generally allowed that the sorrows of Desdemona would be more than counterbalanced by those of Macduff.

Yet if our author's rival pieces (the distinct property of their subjects considered) are written with equal force, it must still be admitted that the latter has more of originality. A novel of considerable length (perhaps amplified and embellished by the English translator of it) supplied a regular and circumstantial outline for *Othello*; while a few slight hints collected from separate narrations of Holinshed, were expanded into the sublime and awful tragedy of *Macbeth*.

Should readers, who are alike conversant with the appropriate excellencies of poetry and painting, pronounce on the reciprocal merits of these great productions, I must suppose they would describe them as of different pedigrees. They would add, that one was of the school of Raphael, the other from that of Michael Angelo; and that if the steady Sophocles and Virgil should have decided in favour of *Othello*, the remonstrances of the daring Æschylus and Homer would have claimed the laurel for *Macbeth*.

To the sentiments of Dr. Lowth respecting the tragedy of *Othello*, a general elogium on the dramatick works of Shakspeare, imputed by a judicious and amiable critick to Milton, may be as improperly subjoined :

"There is good reason to suppose (says my late friend the Rev. Thomas Warton, in a note on *L'Allegro*,) that Milton threw many additions and corrections into the *THEATRUM POETARUM*, a book published by his nephew Edward Philips, in 1675. It contains criticisms far above the taste of that period. Among these is the following judgement on Shakspeare, which was not then, I believe, the general opinion."—"In tragedy, never any expressed a more lofty and tragick height, never any represented nature more purely to the life: and where the polishments of art are most wanting, as probably his learning was not extraordinary, he pleases with a certain WILD and NATIVE elegance." P. 194.

What greater praise can any poet have received, than that of the author of *Paradise Lost*? STEEVENS.


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